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CONTENTS

Page

SOME CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF FREEDOM IN EDUCATION, by *G. H. Bantock* 82

HENRY JAMES AND THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM, by *F. R. Leavis* 98

REFLECTIONS ON CLARENDON'S HISTORY OF THE REBELLION, by *L. C. Knights* 105

HENRY IV—PART II, by *D. A. Traversi* 117

MUSIC CHRONICLE, by *W. H. Mellers* 128

CORRESPONDENCE *re* Mr. Bottrall and Mr. Eliot, and 'Henry IV—Part I' 136

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

'CRITIQUE': THE FIRST TWO YEARS, review by H. A. Mason (p. 137). AMBIGUITY REVISED, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, reviewed by R. G. Cox (p. 148). FOOTNOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART, *The Harp of Aeolus*, reviewed by Geoffrey Walton (p. 152). MR. AUDEN'S QUARTET, *The Age of Anxiety*, reviewed by H. A. Mason (p. 155). *Progressive Exercises in Reading*, reviewed by T. A. Birrell (p. 160).

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SOME CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF FREEDOM IN EDUCATION[1]

IT is characteristic of our present incoherence that at a time when so much stress is being laid on the necessary submission of the individual to the needs of the social order (as those needs are interpreted in relationship to specifically material ends), an increasingly influential though not novel aspect of current educational theory should be based on an uncritical assertion of the individual will. What will be endangered by this, one suspects, is not so much the immediate economic need of society—the planners will see to that, and indeed, the necessity for social co-operation, variously interpreted, provides the binding force admitted—as standards both of intellectual and emotional life, necessary preconditions to maturity. In passing, it may be said that the inability to conceive any restriction on the individual beyond what a hope of purely material prosperity would demand is symptomatic of an age which accepts planning and rejects more transcendental values at the behest of a shallow pragmatism. The particular aspect of the perennial conflict between freedom and order I wish to examine in connection with current educational ideas, related as it obviously is to a change in the balance of political authority and the growing intellectual impoverishment of our political and social life, provides further evidence of our deterioration. I have tried to show that 'order' as Professor Mannheim conceives it is mechanically and inadequately related to the needs of human beings; I hope to show that some of the forces making for freedom and self-expression are similarly tendentious. For of both it is relevant to ask 'within what limits?' And in both cases the answer seems to me unsatisfactory and culturally dangerous.

At first sight the current agitation about education would appear reassuring; there would seem to be, as apologists would assert, a refreshing desire to experiment, to try new wine and to discard old bottles. But even the most strenuous enthusiast for the new way cannot, if he pauses to think, find the pother completely reassuring. Change is no end in itself; it normally betokens a lack of being—sound and fury have a habit of signifying nothing.

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[1]This essay is to be regarded as complementary to the article on *The Cultural Implications of Planning and Popularization* that appeared in *Scrutiny*, Spring 1947. Nevertheless it forms, of course, an entity in itself.

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The emphasis on experiment, one comes to suspect, conceals a basic uncertainty (a view reinforced by current emphasis on method), an unconscious attempt to cover insufficiency by surface agitation.[2] Just as disconcerting are the implicit, sometimes explicit, claims made for education; it has come to be regarded as a panacea for our ills. It reflects further that process, before referred to, by which responsibility is being shifted. It is always the next generation that is to pull the chestnuts out of the fire ('we look to youth . . . ', words in the mouth of every prating politician); all that is needed is the necessary educational opportunity. This emphasis on education is related to the stressing of youth and the general adoption of the standards of youth—other disquieting symptoms. Only a civilization in decline, wishing to surrender that which constitutes civilization, could wish to avoid its responsibilities by projecting its hopes on to a future generation—jam tomorrow, as it were. Such a projection provides a further insight into the nature of the secular Eden that exists, always just beyond the capacity to attain.

Indeed, this reverence for youth and the characteristics of youth, which are, of course, emotional rather than rational, deserves more careful analysis than it has received.[3] Part of its attraction lies in the fact that it is easier to see, and therefore evade, the difficulties of rational behaviour than it is to realize even the need for standards of emotional behaviour. Feeling, to the immature mind, demands merely the exuberance of excess, as it did to the young Keats, for instance. Then other ideas are involved in the cult of youth. The decline in the belief in original sin and the corresponding affirmation of the natural goodness of man—all faults are the responsibility of 'the prison house'—both help to form it. A turning against the discipline inherent in full adult social living has, of course, been related to the rise to power of different social classes; and in the nineteenth century even some of the sophisticated reacted against society because of the admitted barbarities of the social scene. Many other causes could be discovered; but behind all immediate ones could be revealed a whole tradition, based partly on immemorial pastoral convention and partly on a sentimentalizing of the Christian concern for the sanctity of the weak and lowly, features of our emotional life which have implied a constant background of criticism to the hard-won values of 'civilized' existence. In Shakespeare's day, nurture triumphed over nature, court over country as, for example, *The Tempest*

[2]The whole uncertainty springs ultimately from an inability to assess what constitutes an educated man; and that is in itself related to the uncertainty about the nature of man due to the abandonment of the rationalistic solution to the problem, and the inability to construct a widely accepted and coherent anthropological substitute (*cf.* Ernst Cassirer: *An Essay on Man*).

[3]'Children, fools, blackguards make of their inferiority a title for governing the world' (Amiel).

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makes clear. But in our Faustian civilization there has always existed a yearning, often disguised under various social forms, but sometimes more obviously exposed, for a simple life (variously revealed as the pastoral existence, the return to the womb, etc.). This is to permit a release from the complexity of civilization and of the guilt that the conflicts of complexity engender. This notion has not been allowed to develop fully during the sophisticated periods because of the protection provided by a sense of irony that does not ignore such manifestations but only accepts them in relation to other modes of conduct.[4] But when that irony weakens because of the inability of the mind to stand aside from conflict, to detach itself—irony is a feature of maturity, never of youth, and those who accept the valuations of youth must sacrifice it—when, in fact, the situation is felt to be 'serious' and the onlooker willy-nilly involved, partly because of a realization of personal instability and partly because the values of social living have broken down and failed to provide the necessary balance, then indeed there is a surrender to the mere sequence of events; 'being' is forced to give place to 'becoming'.[5] What is obviously in process of becoming—youth—is sought after because its assurance of change represents paradoxically the only permanent value the mind can conceive. One aspect of nineteenth-century 'thought' unconsciously assumed such a surrender to the process of becoming. Today, in terms of numbers, which socially is all that seems to matter, it is the predominant assumption.[6]

Now it is characteristic of the educational theory I am setting out to examine that it should apply to the education of youth those very mental habits that youth most assuredly displays. One conceives of education as a stabilizing process, as an encouragement,

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[4]The seventeenth-century poet could write: 'Society is all but rude to this delicious solitude', and remain aware at once of the truth and falsity of the remark; but Wordsworth's feeling for Tintern Abbey is unequivocal. The eighteenth century represents a moment of equilibrium in the breakdown of this irony: yet even then the feeling for the unadorned and plain, the oft-repeated, the basic statement ('What oft was said . . . ') contains the incipient suggestion of the simplifications of a later period. Baroque with its conscious superimpositions on the classic statement represents the last protest of an adornment that is not merely escapist. It may even be that the simplifications of geometrical order (*e.g.*, the town plan, the formal garden) begin the process of levelling out which unconsciously degenerates into levelling down.

[5]'High seriousness', as nineteenth-century poetry and critical doctrine made clear, precludes in its single-mindedness an appreciation of its opposite, which finds an outlet only in that which is obviously not 'serious' (in the nineteenth-century sense of the word), *i.e.*, nonsense. This, in Carroll and Lear, etc., relates itself to the child in a manner which it would be interesting to pursue (*cf.* W. Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*).

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not of what its object already superabundantly possesses, but of other aspects that it can only attain by a growing into.[7] It should surely involve an appreciation of the other factor in the irony of existence so that there shall be the possibility of coalescence and fusion that will help create the pattern of life; it must provide an element of 'being' in what can else only be a meaningless becoming. Yet this is precisely what this aspect of educational theory ostensibly does not profess—or glosses over in the light of other interests. Practice may do something to correct the imbalance of precept; but the characteristic stresses in such educational writing betray an overall impression that must convey itself to the practitioner.

To begin with, the emphasis is placed on the children.[8] 'The children themselves are the living end and aim of our teaching', says Dr. Susan Isaacs, a remark which in a sense is so obvious that it can only mean more than it says.[9] 'Our attention is focussed, not on a system of education for children, but on the children themselves', states one of the latest practitioners.[10] Implicitly there we have it. The child is so obviously an important factor that the emphasis would hardly be made—except as a reaction against

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[6]The effect of this cult of youth on the instability of intellectual and cultural interests with its consequent introduction of the exigencies of fashion into the world of ideas is worth remarking upon. L. T. Hobhouse provides an interesting comment on the rapid change of dominant interests among the young with its encouragement of superficiality: 'These generations are extraordinarily short-lived. I can count up the intellectual fashions that have taken and held my students for a brief space. When I began in 1907 there was a wave of social idealism. Then very soon came suffrage, then syndicalism, then the war, then guild socialism, then Freud . . . Each of these waves absolutely submerges everything for the time being; be the subject what it will, the students will always get it back one way or another to the popular topic. It's lost labour to refute these things—they just die out in time'. (*L. T. Hobhouse* by Hobson and Ginsberg, quotation from a letter). Such fashions, however, reach beyond the student world.

[7]This phrase will, I hope, make it plain that what I look for in what follows is not the *rigid* imposition of a set standard. George Eliot in *The Mill on the Floss* has some hard and adequate things to say about square pegs in round holes where the education of Tom Tulliver is concerned. But I am interested in the educational weft that is to combine with the warp of the growing mind to form the finished pattern. My concern is related to that of Mr. T. S. Eliot in his diagnosis of the relation of the individual work of art and tradition: 'The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are readjusted; and this is the conformity between the old and the new'. (*Tradition and the Individual Talent*).

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over-rigid educational standards of which today there is little fear—were it not that the 'system of education' obliquely referred to (by which one presumes is meant that which is to be taught, that in fact which, when learnt, gives significance to the child who, without it, becomes a mere living entity no more meaningful than the protoplasm) was about to be abandoned. I say 'abandoned', though of course that represents an extreme that even Mr. A. S. Neill would not perhaps contemplate.[11] In practice such an outlook lends itself to a decline of attainment and an overvaluation of certain qualities, important within certain limits of control but dangerous when allowed unrestricted play.

I need perhaps hardly state at this stage that the theories I am concerned with are offshoots of the Rousseau-Froebel-Pestalozzi line of educational thought—a line whose contribution can be summed up in the proposition 'a child's education ought to permit its freedom of development in accordance with the laws of its own nature'. The logical inconsistencies of this approach have, however, been so admirably exposed by Mr. Charles D. Hardie in his *Truth and Fallacy in Educational Theory* that I prefer to recommend his book to the reader and consider instead some of the over-emphases inherent in the ramifications of the theory, and its cultural implications, points not touched upon by Mr. Hardie.[12]

Now it should be obvious enough that the end of education is not indeed the child, but the child transformed in accordance with a careful consideration of the relative stress to be laid on immediate ends and ultimate good. It is the latter, one feels, that is coming to be increasingly neglected, partly because of the mental limitations of so many of the teachers, partly because of the theory

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[8]It may be argued that what I am about to say is partly invalidated because I am not sufficiently specific about the age of the children involved. I am however concerned to combat a deliberate trend in educational policy that is spreading to the treatment of all ages. Naturally the extent of 'determination' on the part of the teacher may vary in accordance with age of pupil; psychological investigation would seem to show that the *degree* of control and of effort demanded where infants are concerned should differ from that expected of older children. But in all cases, as will emerge, I believe that education should be primarily deterministic, *i.e.*, that it should be much more in the hands of the teacher to determine the nature of what is learnt, and that there should be a much stricter interplay between the child's interests and needs of the moment and the overall necessity of producing as mature an adult as innate mental capacity will permit, than present theory would encourage. This I believe to be necessary at all ages.

[9]Susan Isaacs, *The Children we Teach*, 1932.

[10]M. V. Daniel, *Activity in the Primary School*, 1947.

[11]I do not wish to imply that Mr. Neill may not do good therapeutic work with a particular type of child.

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by which they are hindered and which fails to provide them with any precise conception of those ends. The current emphasis on enjoyment and play methods is obviously relevant here. It is not that enjoyment is wrong or play wicked, though it is to be doubted whether the growing habit of confusing work and play, despite Plato's seeming and oftquoted approval, is to be encouraged.[13] However, with young people the limited aims implicit in such activities may sometimes be necessary. My objection arises from the feeling that even such ends are becoming increasingly neglected. This is so partly because of a lack of clarity of definition, partly because precept removes the civilizing influence (at least to be assumed) of the teacher to too great an extent, and partly because of a fundamental inability to relate the idea of what constitutes an educated person to the apparent need of the moment. The same may be said of the concern for interest: a child it is said should be allowed to develop its own interests in accordance with its needs. But interest is largely the creation of circumstance; it is not a thing a child is born with; and it is up to the teacher to create, not interest

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[12]Mr. Hardie's book, which submits to logical analysis various educational theories (including those associated with Rousseau, Herbart and Dewey), is one of the few books on educational theory appearing in recent years that can be strongly recommended. An excellent criticism of Froebel (it appeared as long ago at 1901!) by Graham Wallas, reprinted in *Men and Ideas*, is relevant. D. H. Lawrence has some vigorous words to say in an interesting though neglected essay that appears in *Phoenix*: 'Education of the People'.

[13]J. H. Huizinga has some interesting comments to make on this confusion which are not inapplicable to the sphere of education; *cf. In the Shadow of Tomorrow*. *Cf.* too the remark of a small boy, quoted by Graham Wallas (*op. cit.*) 'When they play they don't really play, and when they work they don't really work'. Above, I have used the word 'seeming' because it is obvious that even in his approval of play, Plato's attitude was very different from that of some of our educationalists, a fact which they ignore when seeking his approval. 'It is the community standpoint, not the 'natural bent' of childhood, which is the dominating factor. Education takes the play-tendencies of childhood and directs and constrains them until the growing child takes on the mould of the rational, co-operative self-determining citizen . . . Their immature minds are to be directly conditioned, from the very first, to take on the dye of the community laws, so that this shall be indelible'. (R. C. Lodge: *Plato's Theory of Education*, 1947). A recent twist of the theory under examination would seem to involve increasingly the 'group' as the unit (*e.g.*, in *group* activities) which is to 'express itself'. This is especially true in America. It is therefore further relevant to remark that Plato is concerned with only a small section of the community, the self-determining citizens, subject to environmental influences very different to those open to the vast bulk of our children to-day.

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undefined, but the right sort of interest to develop the ultimate good of the child—by performing a very definite and positive function in its life. The contradictions of course are inherent in the looseness of the vocabulary used and the ambiguity of the terms. Interest is no end in itself, as seems to be imagined; there exist standards of interest. Children are interested in their excretory functions but no teacher would encourage such; the objections are too obvious. It is when the nature of the interest is more disputable that problems of value must be faced—and such problems do not appear even to be raised, if practice indeed follows these precepts. Moreover, mature interests that the teacher can see the need of much more readily than the child—playing the piano, for instance—usually involve initial drudgery that may well have to be imposed on the young if their good is to be pursued. A restriction too may be necessary where harmful interests are involved—Plato's ideas on 'music' are relevant here. If the standard is to be freedom, that freedom itself implies the initial restraint and discipline inherent in the process of becoming free to exercise the required skill. I would not stress what indeed seems to me so evident were it not that I feel that the whole of our teaching practice, whether when 'free activity' methods or even more formal ones are adopted, suffers from a basic confusion. The advance in the knowledge of child psychology is important in-so-far as technique is concerned but it can have no effect on the aims and ends of education, which like the ends of life, I believe 'exist' as absolute objectives,[14] and to be intimately related one to the other. To make the individual interests of the child the end is to abrogate all possibility of cultural coherence and in addition to deny the child what is essential, a sense of what is to be achieved. It is not too much to say that it is the function of the school to leave a child with a sense of and a respect for what he does not know, in addition to a confidence about such skills as he has succeeded in acquiring.[15]

But before pursuing this topic further, it may be useful to examine more specifically a recent pronouncement related to the theory under review. It will provide further information about the nature of the existence sanctioned by this theory; and it will afford an interesting insight, to those unacquainted with current writing on educational problems, into the quality of mind entrusted with their solution. It is taken from an educational journal; and those journals themselves would well repay scrutiny. Many reveal an almost total lack of intellectual interest which only those well acquainted with the cultural preoccupations of the average teacher would credit.

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[14]For reasons, of course, which I cannot possibly discuss here.
[15]That it may be necessary consciously to accept limited ends for limited mentalities raises another though related problem. The fact is, however, that in the theory I am attacking such ends are not regarded as limited; the possibilities inherent in the child become the end in itself.

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The extract is from a periodical symptomatically entitled ***The New Era,*** and it is part of an article on 'Group activity in School', by Professor H. R. Hamley, Professor of Education at the University of London Institute of Education:

> 'In an article published in 1918, W. H. Kilpatrick, the father of the Project Method, tells us that he "appropriated the word 'project' to designate the typical unit of the worthy life". This puts the emphasis in the right place. The project, whether isolated or functionally related to other projects . . . is an echo of life, of life that is rich and significant, of life that is really worth living. If that is so, the characteristics of the project are the characteristics of the life that is worth living. Among them are the following: *purpose, significance, interest, spontaneity* and *social co-operation.* A full discussion of these terms would lead us rather too far from our present purpose. The only term that may need a word of explanation is 'spontaneity'. Now it is one of the characteristics of life that it is not fixed or determined, strictly ordered or predictable; on the contrary, it is spontaneous and free, full of variety and enticing uncertainty. Life is a becoming, an unfolding, a continuous creation and no one knows with certainty what it will become or what the unfolding will finally yield. Where there is life, we say, there is hope. The glory of the project, whether it be an individual or a social project, is its *spontaneity,* its responsiveness to the evolving situation. No one knows, not even the teacher, exactly how it will turn out; no one knows the answer, for in many cases there is not one; at all events it cannot be found in any answer-book. The project has no pre-arranged standard either of appreciation or of attainment'.

Now it might be argued that this sort of stuff is hardly worth powder and shot; and indeed, it would not be were it not for the position held by its author, the influence of the London Institute, and the fact that it represents so well an attitude of mind that is being increasingly adopted by our schools and colleges. I am not here concerned with the project method adequately handled (though I think there are grave dangers inherent in any attempt to correlate knowledge in such a way at too early a stage).[16] I am concerned with a deplorable looseness of terminology and a vapidity of expression that are all too typical. Professor Hamley's characteristics of what used to be known as the 'good life' (one imagines such a phrase, with its associations of Greek philosophy might well introduce a note of moral austerity hurtful to the spinsterish exuberance of Professor Hamley's careless raptures) are so incoherently jumbled as to imply anything or nothing. It is hard indeed to see what purpose is served by applying a similar set of substantives to an intellectual concept like a project and to the life of an

[16]Mr. Hardie summarizes some objections to the project method, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

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individual; and Professor Hamley was perhaps wise to shelve a discussion of their meaning. But Professor Hamley's definition of 'spontaneity' is welcome, for the word, usually unexplained, crops up a great deal in this type of writing. As a human characteristic, 'spontaneity' seems to have attached to itself a peculiar charm of its own. It is perhaps pressing its meaning too far to ask precisely what significance in isolation such a term can have for human beings at all. For, as Wordsworth realized, even the most 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' is yet inextricably related to the prior necessity of long and deep thought that he quite rightly thought essential to the act of creation; such a period of gestation was inherent in the act. Correlations can be made in the mind which, leading to new fusions of thought, give an appearance of spontaneous creativity (*cf.* Coleridge's views on Imagination). But all this assumes a prior discipline, a 'subservience strictly to external things'. There must, in Coleridge's own phrase, be a 'correlation of subject and object'. Such ideas, as far as one can judge, do not appear to be part of Professor Hamley's intention (although, indeed, that intention is so vaguely expressed that it is difficult to pin Professor Hamley down in any precise way). What, however, he seems to be congratulating himself on is a lack of restraint, a venting of the impulse of the moment, the deliberately unpremeditated quality of what happens.

Such ideas are very common in contemporary teaching of art; they form, indeed, the main staple of the theory. Vast claims are made for the teaching of the visual arts which seem to me to be completely invalid (though no one will accuse me, I hope, of under-rating the importance of the arts). Mr. Read, for instance, goes so far as to assert that 'the secret of our collective ills is to be traced to the suppression of the spontaneous creative ability in the individual'. It all seems to me to be bound up with an over-emphasis on certain qualities, such as imagination, which need a much more thorough critical investigation than I can afford here, but to the need for which I can at least draw attention. Thus, in a recent article on 'Arts and Crafts',[17] Mr. Green, for instance, asserts that 'the expressive and imaginative qualities of a drawing will always be more important than mere factual statement'. It seems to me a remark of doubtful validity, without a prior investigation into the *quality* of the imagination and expression involved.[18] And Mr. Green's uneasiness betrays itself when he discovers that

[17]Printed in *The Quality of Education*, ed. D. Thompson and James Reeve.

[18]Imagination, loosely used, too often comes to mean 'fantasy-life'. The stimulation of this quality is all too much encouraged as it is, in our civilization of the cinema and the 'tuppenny blood'. When again, it is urged that the child is to be told to draw 'what he sees', the results all too frequently are the consequence of bad factual statement. The use of the word 'imagination' and especially that of 'creative' seem to me to merit the fullest investigation.

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there is 'no artistic lapse in making a precise drawing of a plant, showing careful research into its structure . . . It was not beneath the dignity of masters of the stature of Dürer and many others to make such drawings'. It was not indeed. It is true that some children possess a certain innate gift of expression and are capable of evolving naïve and simple patterns to which the adjective 'pleasing' might be applied; but no achievement of any real worth is possible without a long and arduous submission to the need of acquiring a technique by means of which what in fact is observed of 'nature' can be adequately conveyed to the viewer. Moreover, the acquiring of technique surely has a repercussion on what in fact the artist 'sees'; for increased mastery of means leads to an increasingly subtle understanding of ends . . . if the student has the necessary artistic integrity and capacity. It is odd indeed that the practice of art teachers in this respect would seem to fly in the face of the experience of all the great masters; and it is instructive to examine the practice of the one great artist who has been quoted to exemplify the results of 'spontaneity', William Blake. Mr. Anthony Blunt has irrefutably shown how much Blake depended upon a careful study of the work of his predecessors. His own words testify to what he thought about careful copying:

> ' . . . no one can ever Design till he has learned the Language of Art by making many Finished Copies both of Nature and Art and of whatever comes in his way from Earliest Childhood. The difference between a bad Artist and a Good One Is: the Bad Artist Seems to copy a Great deal. The Good one Really does Copy a Great deal',

and a little later: 'Servile Copying is the Great Merit of Copying'.[19]

It is possible that some art teachers would argue that their aim is not to train artists, but that the worth of 'free expression' lies in a certain therapeutic value; it is regarded as a means of ridding the child of its inhibitions by giving it scope to exercise its creative faculties. Despite Mr. Herbert Read, however, it is difficult to see the final therapeutic value of the type of free expression

[19]Anthony Blunt: *Blake's Pictorial Imagination*, published in the Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute (1943). Admittedly in his quarrel with Reynold's views on art as an imitation of nature based on the necessity for following 'the other masters as a guide in making the selection necessary to arrive at a general idea of nature', Blake gave vent to such remarks as: 'Imagination is My World: this World of Dross is beneath my Notice', and 'Knowledge of Ideal Beauty is Not to be Acquired. It is Born with us'; but these statements seem to have had largely a polemical value, the product of an emotional reaction against Reynolds' ideas. Blake's practice shows how carefully he followed the masters, as Mr. Blunt has conclusively shown; and his remarks on copying show that in his imaginative efforts he was conscious of depending on a prior discipline.

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permitted. For an essential part of any mental therapy lies surely in the re-ordering of experience in relationship to something other than itself, a coming to terms with that which lies outside the self, and the consequent emergence of the self on a new level of experience; this involves a submission at some stage to a discipline of a sort, a discipline for which the theory seems to make little allowance. It is a pity that in their reaction against a bad technique —that which produced the stilted, naturalistic drawing of the last century—art teachers should have thrown over all efforts to impart technique, in the manner suggested by Professor Cizek: 'Each child is a law unto himself and should be allowed to develop his own technique'.[20]

I suggest, then, that it would not be impertinent at least to hint a doubt and to suggest that a more astringent investigation into the nature of the theory relating to 'spontaneous expression' is called for. What Professor Hamley has further to say, about life as a 'becoming', etc., is so banal as to be hardly worth the saying. It is true in the sense that no one knows precisely what the future holds. To make this obvious fact an excuse for the abeyance or the depreciation of attempts at rational forethought and control—qualities that distinguish what is specifically man—is to abandon the precarious values on which man has built up his civilization. The freedom Professor Hamley so ardently admires is the fruit of this forethought. To be at the mercy of the 'evolving situation' is to be bound by accident and temporary exigence—to become like Hamlet passion's slave and hence to lose the native hue of resolution. The restrictions of a narrowly rational approach will preclude a complete assessment of the imponderables in a changing situation (a fact that a profounder rationalism will allow for). Professor Ginsberg's realization that 'Reason may recognize the value of spontaneity' admits that the 'adjustment of the claims of

[20]Even more astonishing are the claims made for child art, claims which seem to betoken a surrender to a naïve and singularly restricted range of experience, a restriction, incidentally, which appears to have affected much adult art of recent years. Mr. R. R. Tomlinson, in *Children as Artists*, states that 'No claim is made by the author that children's drawings have the same art content as the work of adult artists, but he does contend that they have a similar appeal to the emotions'. It is necessary to draw attention to the question-begging use of 'similar'? This admittedly short book, with its uncritical formulation of the current theory, lays itself open to attack on many occasions. There is, for instance, the remarkable statement that 'Primitives (of the school of Giotto and Cimabue) . . . resemble children in one essential respect; in their artistic urge to explore with zeal entirely new paths, untutored and unaided'. The paradox of D. H. Lawrence is worth noticing. 'Let our ideal be living spontaneous individuality in every man and woman. Which living spontaneous individuality, being the hardest thing of all to come at, *will need most careful rearing*' (*Op. cit.*, my italics).

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this value to the needs of control is one of (reason's) most difficult tasks'; but the difficulty does not provide an excuse for failing to make the attempt. The happiness that lies beyond the reach of art is yet the product of that art. To assert that 'the project has no pre-arranged standard either of appreciation or attainment' is to ignore the aim which may be exceeded but alone gives meaning to the undertaking.

Now this type of approach is not only not the prerogative of an aberrational educational institute; it is also receiving increasing official sanction. The much quoted words of the ministry's report on *The Primary School* are relevant. There it is stated that 'the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored'; and such a thesis is being maintained in the years beyond the primary school. As a result of the contempt which is being increasingly directed against the 'bookish few', 'activity' is being thought of more and more in purely physical terms. That physical movement is a necessary feature of the development of children is an indisputable fact; it is the relative emphasis that is becoming disquieting. Again, experience (by which is usually meant impressions received from the immediate physical environment) only acquires significance as it is related to knowledge—there is a correlation between the two and to emphasize the one at the expense of the other is to impoverish the meaning of experience itself. When Keats wrote that he did not think anything could be known for truth until it had been 'proved upon our pulses', he ignored the fact that the possibility of response to experience is not innate, and that prior knowledge, even of mere despised fact, may well enable the experience, when it is undergone, to take on meaning—or at least, a deeper meaning. Thus my experience of certain of the difficulties of emotional growth will be deepened by a prior reading of, say, *Hamlet*. The assumption of the report is that knowledge cannot become 'real' until it has been directly verified, a view which, one would have thought, has been sufficiently exploded.[21]

[21]It is interesting to note that the subject-matter of even grammar school education has become increasingly pragmatic over the last hundred years. (In a sense, of course, it is true that most education has always had a pragmatic bias, for there was a time when a knowledge of Latin had a severe practical value. But the pragmatic has undoubtedly received more considerable emphasis in recent years). Partly this may have been inevitable; but the fact that we may be faced, for instance, with an almost complete abandonment of classical education because such a training is not directly applicable to everyday experience and is not itself the fruit of the need of the moment is symptomatic. I am not, of course, concerned to argue the virtues or vices of a classical training. I am concerned with the objections which lie behind its unpopularity, which would be equally applicable to any other discipline (*e.g.*, a deeper study of English) which was put in its place.

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One of the more deplorable effects of this type of theory lies of course, in the increasing abdication of the function of the teacher. His or her job is becoming more and more that of merely providing an adequate environment so that the children shall be able 'to follow up lines of interest and exercise every muscle in their bodies and every faculty of their minds', as Miss M. V. Daniel exuberantly proclaims. It seems to me to afford merely another aspect of the general abandonment of intellectual and moral leadership in our society. The whole unwillingness to impose a view of life merely means that a worse view will be adopted, for a child cannot live in a vacuum. One would have thought that the need for demanding standards—or at least creating a framework, which, while permitting a certain flexibility would rigidly exclude deleterious interests and pursuits—was never more necessary to-day when the teacher is—or should be—one of the few civilizing influences in our vulgarized social order. The whole tendency towards making the child his own standard in the name of initiative and self-confidence is to be condemned as corrupting to the child. Self-confidence, as those who have taught know, so frequently comes to mean a self-satisfaction based on the type of egotism George Santayana so strongly and rightly condemns: 'Egotism is always a vice because founded on a mistake. It assumes, if it does not assert, that the source of one's being and power lies in oneself . . . and that nothing should control the mind or the conscience except the mind or the conscience itself'. There are indeed enough of the low on whom assurance sits leaving our schools and colleges without multiplying their numbers by intent. To feel that one has a claim on attention under certain circumstances is one thing; to feel that that claim has always to be met is pervasively corrupting to those very virtues the romantic educationalists profess to encourage.[22] It involves too an abandonment of the basis of all ethical training, the creation of a sense of obligation, the contract inherent in an undertaking, the 'seriousness' of the act and the consequent care for *self-respect* which the admission of obligation involves and which is the offspring of renunciation as much as of self-indulgence; in a word, the loss of a sense of reverence,[23] and a loss of the 'tension' necessary for achievement.

I believe, of course, that this outlook is closely related to a

[22]Eighty years ago, Amiel wrote: 'Our young people are detestable and are becoming more and more unmanageable and insolent . . . The baby wishes to have the privileges of the young man, and the young man means to keep those of the ill-behaved little boy . . . From the moment that difference in quality is officially equal to zero in politics, it is clear that the authority of age is bound to disappear'. (*Journal*: March 20, 1865). *Cf.*, too, Keyserling's remark: 'The best practical solution which I have found in order to create an equation between my children and myself is to treat them as though they were distinguished strangers'. (*The Art of Life*).

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vast change that is taking place in our social structure and the balance of political power. It is realized that, now that for the first time in human history a whole population is being educated, and thus clamours for attention, a vast majority can find no place in the traditional educational system, for their mental abilities are inadequate to the discipline exacted. It is argued that nevertheless the mediocre must have their chance; as the Harvard Committee report expresses it:

> 'The record of such people over history—the simple-hearted, those who have done the unobserved work of the world—is certainly at least as good as that of their more gifted—and more tempted—brethren. They are as worthy and as valuable democratic citizens as anyone else'.

The second sentence, of course, is just not true, as it should hardly be necessary to insist on here; it accords ill, in any case with the Committee's recognition that some ideas are more valuable than others, for in some sense of the word, ideas are obviously the 'products' of individual minds, and the progenitors of more valuable ideas are therefore of greater worth to the community. But in any case it should be sufficiently clear that no society can exist for long that allows itself to be governed by the values of the mediocre in the manner encouraged by our civilization. The problem of how to reconcile the standards of maturity with the requirements of the many—the central problem of mass civilization and minority culture—is not, however, to be met by a chaotic throwing-over of such standards as still survive at the behest of the individual, regardless of that individual's capacity and right to be considered. Even if with sections of our population limited educational aims are necessary—and of course they are—the fact that they are so limited must be clearly recognized and explicitly allowed for. The aim for any one group must recognize the ambiguity inherent in the idea of 'need', and must also realize its place in the hierarchy; then the 'needs' can be related to what is also desirable and it can be seen that their gratification is controlled by an appreciation not only of the individual's felt requirement but of the highest truths known to man. Finally the standard implicit in the aim, however limited, must be exacted. The desire to teach too much and too superficially is one of the curses of our educational system; a careful appreciation of the dignity inherent in even a limited undertaking—limitations consciously appreciated—would be preferable to a system that makes a superficial know-all

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[23] 'To hear these young people talking really fills me with black fury: they talk endlessly, but endlessly—and never, never a good or a real thing said. They are cased each in a hard little shell of his own, and out of this they talk. There is never for one second any outgoing of feeling, and no reverence, not a crumb or grain of reverence . . . It is this horror of little swarming selves that I can't stand'. (D. H. Lawrence).

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of even the commonest of men.[24] It is for reasons of this sort that attempts to secure a 'general education' that will provide a 'common core of knowledge' which the Harvard Committee is concerned to obtain in America by emphasizing the necessity of a common syllabus based on the Humanities, the Sciences and Social Studies need to be regarded with a certain degree of suspicion. How this syllabus is to be adapted to the needs of the less able is carefully glossed over; it is only stated that it is to involve '*new* and *authentic* treatments of these great subjects, not simply waterings-down of harder courses for the less able'.[25] All this is too reminiscent of Professor Mannheim's 'essentials' to need analysis here.

It should be clear that the educational theory I have been examining reaches far beyond the purview of the school and is at once a reflection of and a further means of implementing the profoundly anti-rational forces we have seen at work in our own day. By failing to distinguish adequately between the relative worth and stability of impulses and feelings, by making, in its extremest form, the individual's desires and attainments the final test, by encouraging the belief that the possibilities of attainment are not subject to rational analysis where what is essentially irrational and incapable, the child, is concerned, this theory proclaims its adherence to a body of ideas that is and has been destroying the wisdom of the European tradition on which our civilization has been built. I need hardly perhaps point its relevance to that outlook that regards taste, for instance, as something essentially relative, and the phrase 'I like it' as the first and last words in literary criticism.[26]

I have said that this essay was to be regarded as complementary to my remarks on planning and popularization. I have tried to show that in neither the mechanical rigidities of Professor Mannheim, nor in the careless abandonment of our hard-won values

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[24]One of the current dangers lies in the contemporary condemnation of specialization. One appreciates the danger of over-specialization; but if some critics had their way, very soon instead of a few knowing a good deal about something nobody would know very much about anything. Cross fertilization is important, but there has to be something to fertilize.

[25]*General Education in a Free Society*, report of the Harvard Committee (1946). My italics.

[26]I would be sorry if it were thought that the alternative I suggest is a return to the 'beat-their-backsides' school of pedagogic thought. What has been done is not all loss; but I suggest that a much closer scrutiny of principles is necessary and a much more rigorous approach to the whole problem essential. Were it not thought too pretentious, I would like to define my position with Matthew Arnold's: 'I am a Liberal, yet I am a Liberal tempered by experience, reflection and renouncement, and I am, above all, a believer in culture'.

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at the behest of a sentimental concern for the more immediate interests and needs of the individual, whether child or adult, lies our true way. Though I believe objective values to 'exist', our human imperfection does not enable us to grasp them completely, which means that an adequate outlook must always be prepared to admit the implications of new aspects of knowledge; these may necessitate a slight and careful reassessment of certain values in the light of new experience. But the necessity of such 'spontaneous' knowledge must not prevent our acting in accordance with the highest values mankind has discovered in the necessity imposed on us of determining the conditions by which we are to live. An abandonment to the immediate interests of the moment, in the name of an illusory freedom, would be as disastrous as a submission to the strait-jacket of the economic planner's will—indeed both are much more closely related than at first sight would seem obvious as joint manifestations of despair. An educational outlook affects and is affected by the quality of the age of which it is a manifestation. The inadequacy and superficiality of many of our educational ideas is a sad comment—*if comment there need be*—on our inability to assess adequately the requirements either of freedom or of order.

G. H. BANTOCK.

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HENRY JAMES AND THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

TO form a just idea of Mr. Quentin Anderson's contribution to the understanding of Henry James one needs to have read his essay in *The Kenyon Review* for Autumn 1946. He had room there to develop his case at length, and the interested reader of the briefer presentment that, at the Editors' invitation, he wrote for *Scrutiny* (September and December, 1947), ought to know that the fuller treatment exists and may, by those who have no access to it, be taken as, in an important respect, finally convincing.

Mr. Anderson has established, I think, a very interesting fact. Not only are there decided manifestations in James's work of a strong and sympathetic interest on his part in his father's system; in certain of his books, generally considered as constituting his 'major phase', the system is present to such effect that, unadverted and uninformed, the reader is without the key to the essential intention—the intention that makes the given book what it is and explains what James saw it as being. The fact, then, has its bearings for criticism.

The statement of these is not a simple matter. Moreover, Mr. Anderson seems to me to have started with radical misconceptions as to what they could be. But I should like at the outset to make quite plain my sense of the positive value of his work. His argument regards mainly the late novels. These, of course, are very highly rated by the fashionable admirers of James, who, indeed, assume them to be the supreme expressions of his genius, but seem quite incapable of suggesting either any intelligible grounds for the assumption or any clear idea of the kind of thing we are supposed to be admiring. Novels are novels; James's distinction, we gather, is that he handles with great refinement the relations between 'civilized' individuals—representative members of a Victorian or Edwardian house-party: these late books (that appears to be the assumption) are especially alembicated specimens of the same variety of 'the novel'. Well, Mr. Anderson shows that *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* are, in intention, allegories about Man, and by both intention and method much more closely related to *Everyman* than to 'the novel of manners'. If this fact can be brought to general notice its disconcerting effect may be salutary. It may even induce some receptivity in respect of the truth that even in his earlier work James is not a mere novelist of manners; so that ultimately it will become impossible for critics to tell us, as Mr. David Garnett does, that James's characters are

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'ordinary people' . . . 'just as much alive as the people we meet in hotels or at the houses of our friends, but no more'.

But to return to my disagreements with Mr. Anderson: he doesn't, I've suggested, deal satisfactorily with the critical bearings of the fact he establishes. The fact itself, I think, is less clear-cut and measurable than he supposes. '*The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl* were planned as a single poem embracing the history of mankind. They represent three stages in the experience of the race which are paralleled by three stages in the moral career of an individual'. And Mr. Anderson, in his essay in *The Kenyon Review*, gives a detailed account of the three works as allegorizing faithfully and comprehensively the blend of Swedenborg and Fourier (for that's what it is, though Mr. Anderson himself doesn't put it that way) elaborated by Henry James senior. I am not convinced that the younger James even in intention identified himself as completely with his father's system as that—I can't believe it, if only because the system, taken as a whole, seems to me pretty meaningless, except as satisfying the particular emotional and moral needs of the leisure-class American idealist who elaborated it.

But what I have to insist on is that intention in the important sense can only be determined by the tests applied in literary criticism. The analysis and judgment of works of literary art belong to the literary critic, who *is* one in so far as he observes a disciplined relevance in response, comment and determination of significance. He is concerned with the work in front of him as something that should contain within itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise. The more experience—experience of life and literature together—he brings to bear on it the better, of course; and it is true that extraneous information may make him more percipient. But the business of critical intelligence will remain what it was: to ensure relevance of response and to determine what is actually *there* in the work of art. The critic will be especially wary how he uses extraneous knowledge about the writer's intentions. Intentions are nothing in art except as realized, and the tests of realization will remain what they were. They are applied in the operation of the critic's sensibility; they are a matter of his sense, derived from his literary experience, of what the living thing feels like—of the difference between that which has been willed and put there, or represents no profound integration, and that which grows from a deep centre of life. These tests may very well reveal that the deep animating intention (if that is the right word) is something very different from the intention the author would declare.

My main criticism of Mr. Anderson is that he is not, in his interpretation of James, actively enough a literary critic: his use of his key seems to be something apart from his critical sensibility. Doesn't he assume his value-judgments, and rest inertly on the conventional consensus that rates the late novels so high? I may be wrong in this general suggestion, but I am sure that his com-

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mentary on *The Ambassadors* implies an indefensible valuation. Why should he assume that the reader tends, almost irresistibly (though mistakenly), to identify himself with Strether? I can only comment that I haven't been in the least tempted so to identify myself, or to spend any moral or intellectual energy determining the worth or significance of Strether's resolution to 'have got nothing for himself'. For all the light Mr. Anderson throws on possible intentions, *The Ambassadors* still seems to me so feeble a piece of word-spinning that I should have been inclined to dismiss it as merely senile if James hadn't himself provided an explanation in telling us that it had been conceived as a short story. What Mr. Anderson points to is a set of preoccupations that helps us to understand how James should have been so mistakenly led into fluffing out the story to the bulk and pretensions of a major work.

I suspect that *The Ambassadors*, which to me remains wholly boring, doesn't belong so essentially with the other late 'great' novels as Mr. Anderson thinks—and as, perhaps, James himself, in elaborating it, intended. But before I leave Strether I have a comment to make on the kind of significance Mr. Anderson attributes to him. Strether represents, we are told, self-righteousness. What Mr. Anderson's argument, so far as I understand it, seems to compel one to point out is that self-righteousness and moral neutrality are not exhaustive alternatives. We can resolve to eschew self-righteousness, and yet, without inconsistency, believe we have a duty of moral discrimination. It is true that our judgments ought to come from an impersonal centre in us, and that we shouldn't have been able to make them but for a truth the statement of which would be a generalized form of Mr. Anderson's proposition: 'If James had not felt in himself the very impulses which he saw crystallized in American manners he would not have understood American manners'. This possibility of impersonality and this measure of 'community of consciousness' are implied in the existence of art.

Difficult as they are for discussion and definition, these truths are profoundly familiar. It is only here and there, in the individual focus, that consciousness exists, and yet, as the experience of great literature brings home to us very forcibly, and the more forcibly the more we ponder it, that is not the last word: the individual focus of consciousness is not an insulated unit, whose relation with others are merely external and susceptible of statement in Benthamite terms.

It is difficult to see what more can be conveyed by the phrase in which Mr. Anderson summarizes the elder James, 'We all share the same consciousness', than a reminder of these familiar truths. Clearly, it can't be literally true: when the lorry breaks your leg you feel the pain and I don't. And what the special Jamesian intention may be is not given definition and cogency by any success of concrete presentment in the younger James's art.

But at this point there is a discrimination to be made: both *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* seem to me much

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more interesting than *The Ambassadors*, and interesting in the general way suggested by Mr. Anderson. They are no more specimens of 'the novel' than *Everyman* is a specimen of naturalistic drama. Thanks to the light brought by Mr. Anderson we can see, for instance, in the peculiar impressiveness of Mrs. Lowder of *The Wings of the Dove*, 'Britannia of the Market-Place', a triumph of morality art. Yet that light makes no essential difference to my own final judgments about the book, which remains, as preponderantly as before, fussily vague and intolerably sentimental. Milly Theale, for all the elaboration of indirectnesses with which James sets about generating her, remains an empty excuse for unctuous sentimentality. Kate Croy continues to engage more of our sympathy than suits with the author's purpose.

The Golden Bowl had always seemed the most interesting of the late novels. Helped by Mr. Anderson, we can give a better account of its relative strength—though not, I think, a less disabling account of its total unsatisfactoriness. Adverted of the morality intention, we can refrain from dismissing Adam Verver *tout court* as the American millionaire denatured and sentimentalized. Adam, we can see, stands for America in certain of its aspects—on the one hand (going with the loosening of tradition) a characteristic innocence combined with generous goodwill, and, on the other, the supremacy of wealth that makes possible the purchase of what America hasn't been able to produce, represented by Prince Amerigo and the fabulous collection of *objets d'art* that is to be housed in American City. What precisely the allegorical intention amounts to in full it's difficult to determine—to say which is to make a radical criticism. Certainly it doesn't merely amount to the elder James's system. For not only is American City a penal Botany Bay for Charlotte Verver; about the withdrawal there of the Ververs (with their purchases, animate and inanimate) there is an unmistakable pathos.

What we are not reconciled to by any awareness of intentions is the outraging of our moral sense by the handling of the adultery theme—the triangle, or rather quadrilateral, of personal relations. We remain convinced that when an author, whatever symbolism he intends, presents a drama of men and women, he is committed to dealing in terms of men and women, and mustn't ask us to acquiesce in valuations that contradict our profoundest ethical sensibility. If, of course, he can work a revolutionary change in that sensibility, well and good, but who will contend that James's art in those late novels has that power? In *The Golden Bowl* we continue to find our moral sense outraged.

Actually we can see that James doesn't realize what violent accommodations he is demanding of us, for his own sense of life is in abeyance. This, in spite of our knowledge of allegorical or morality intentions and in spite of all our attempts to say what can be said in favour of *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*, is the judgment we rest at. And what, in fact, Mr. Anderson has done is to further the diagnosis of James's late phase. It had

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already been plain that the hypertrophy of technique, the over-doing, was correlated with a malnutrition. James paid the penalty of living too much as novelist, and not richly enough as a man. He paid the price, too, of his upbringing—of never having been allowed to take root in any community, so that, for all his intense critical interest in civilization, he never developed any sense of society as a system of functions and responsibilities. And he spent his life, when not at house-parties of a merely social kind (he was unaware, it would seem, of the Victorian country-house at its functional best), dining out and writing. The deep consciousness that he had no public and no hope of real critical attention would confirm the dispositions tending to life-impoverishment in his art. It is in this late period that the inherited symbolism assumes control, and we can see why this should be so: it moves into the place once occupied in force by the system of interests belonging to the novelist as novelist—the system of interests derived from his most vital experience. We can see too that in coming so to power it both increases, and disguises from James, the separation of his art from life.

The system of symbolism, in short, doesn't represent the structure of interests behind his operative sensibility; it doesn't belong with his creativeness. It is from the beginning in fact, associated with an odd weakness, which, we can now see, it helps to explain—for, as Mr. Anderson enables us to perceive, an intention to be identified with it asserts itself as an intrusive presence even in James's early phase. A representative instance may be seen in *The American*, with its symbolically named hero, Christopher Newman, who, starting from nothing, has rapidly made his pile in the West, and yet is offered to us as embodying a guileless integrity that places him at a disadvantage in dealing with a corrupt and self-seeking aristocratic Europe. If we ask how James can have been guilty of so preposterous an unreality, the answer lies in the paternal spell. The system of the elder James had at its centre, as its living principle, an optimistic and idealistic Americanism. The relation to reality of the satisfaction it gave him is suggested by a passage quoted by Mr. Matthiessen in *The James Family* (p. 286):

> 'They [the English] are an intensely vulgar race, high and low . . . They are not worth studying. The prejudices one has about them, even when they are unjust, are scarcely worth correcting . . . They belong, all their good and their evil, to the past humanity, to the infantile development of the mind, and they don't deserve, more than any other European nation, the least reverence from a denizen of the new world'.

The younger James—while he remained a good novelist, at any rate—was not as simple-minded as that. He knew that he preferred living in France and England to living in America, and in that drama of critical-constructive interplay between different traditions which provides the organization of so much of his best work, he

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shows himself capable of intelligent and convincing discriminations in favour of America. He evinces, nevertheless, a deep-seated desire to produce a transcendent and aboriginally pure American superiority—a desire, we can see, related to his filial devotion. James himself places *The American* as 'romantic', and the romanticism is a matter of the insurrectionary prepotence of this desire, which comes out again, to take another familiar instance, in his *Daisy Miller* (who is real enough—so real that the implicit valuation of her presents the reader with a problem).

In James's creative phases the manifestations of the impulse are sporadic and anomalous. In *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* it rules unchastened and unchecked. We are to take Milly Theale as superlatively a Princess, and as a supremely fit object of awed and compassionate reverence, merely because she is an American heiress on a fabulous scale (she isn't even represented as intelligent). As for Adam Verver of *The Golden Bowl*, it may be true that he isn't to be taken as merely a more preposterous Christopher Newman, but both Newman and Verver, it is plain, are intimately associated with the optimistic Fourier-cum-Swedenborg Americanism in which the elder James (whose freedom from economic cares had been earned by his father) indulged his idealism and his sheltered ignorance of the more rigid facts of life. The younger James, yielding to the paternal inspiration, and preoccupied with elaborating in its interest the ambiguities and evasions of his late technique, had himself lost touch with concrete life.

The optimism, Mr. Anderson reminds us, was incompatible with tragic art; that suggests its relation to James's greatness. Consider *Washington Square, The Portrait of a Lady, The Awkward Age* . . . : these works are characteristic expressions of his essential genius, and they are tragic. If the optimism had prevailed we shouldn't have had them. Plainly, however intense may have been James's interest in his father's system, his relation to it can't ever have been quite what Mr. Anderson suggests, and in so far as James did at any time incline to the optimism this was at odds with his essential genius. And it is surely significant that nowhere in the *Notebooks*, in the copious discussing of themes for novels and stories, is there the least reference to any symbolic intention.

It is true that a great artist's consciousness is in a profound way representative and never unconditioned by the age and culture to which he belongs. But it doesn't at all follow, as Mr. Anderson seems to suggest, that James, because he was born in America, had, as great artist, to share that optimistic American 'myth'. His strength was both American and more than American, and it enabled him, when he was a great artist, to transcend the optimism. He was, it is clear, also drawn to it. It seems to me equally clear that this weakness was closely correlated with another that looks like its antithesis. I am thinking of the very unpleasantly sentimental morbidity exemplified by *The Altar of the Dead*. And that morbidity seems in its turn to be related to the curious

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suggestion of abnormality, the preoccupation with indefinite evil, of which *The Turn of the Screw* is the best-known illustration.

I must before closing say that the facts adduced by Mr. Anderson make no difference at all to my appreciation of those works of James which made him for me a great writer. I ought perhaps to confess that I couldn't antecedently have believed that facts of that kind could, in the nature of things, make any notable difference: the works I admired were what they clearly were, and the grounds of my admiration were such as I certainly hadn't put there myself. The works I am thinking of are *The Europeans, Washington Square, The Bostonians, The Portrait of a Lady, The Awkward Age, What Maisie Knew* and a number of *nouvelles* having virtues of the same order as the major works. I see no possibility at all of questioning the nature and conditions of the value of these things.

What strikes us first about them as we read them is the vivid concreteness of the rendering of this world of individual centres of consciousness we live in—a rendering such as seems to imply a kind of interest and a habit of discrimination that bear no relation to any Swedenborgian ethos. Then, the organization that, when we have completed the reading of the given book, is seen to give it significance as a work of art involves no reference to any such symbolism as Mr. Anderson describes. What we have, for instance, in *The Europeans* and *The Portrait of a Lady* is a characteristic (as I see it) critical and constructive interplay, done in dramatic terms, between different cultural traditions; an interplay in which discriminations for and against are made in respect of both sides, American and European, and from which emerges the suggestion of an ideal positive that is neither. James here is unmistakably preoccupied with the thought of a possible world in which the country house, with its external civilization, shall also be a centre of the life of the spirit; in which manners shall be the index of an inner fineness; and in which the man of the world and inveterate diner-out who is also an intellectual novelist shall be able to find congenial society and a public capable of appreciating his novels. The characters and the action are 'symbolic' (to use the treacherous word) in a Shakespearean way, and the discriminations made invoke criteria of personality and moral quality that the cultivated reader recognizes, and can accept, immediately. The organization, again, of a representative success like *The Lesson of the Master*, is no more to be explained in terms of Swedenborgian symbolism. The relations between the young author and the veteran clearly dramatize the complex debate that has gone on in James himself, between the special exacting claims of his art, and his fears, both as man and artist, of missing the full experience of life.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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REFLECTIONS ON CLARENDON'S HISTORY OF THE REBELLION[1]

THE title of my paper is intended to indicate both the unsystematic and the non-specialized nature of my approach to my subject. Clarendon is a great historian, and adequately to assess his work as an historian demands qualifications that I certainly do not possess. But the *History of the Rebellion* is not merely a book for the specialist. It can be read with profit by all who are interested in our civilization, its past and present. It reveals a phase in that civilization. And when we reflect on what it reveals we find that we are contemplating themes concerning the relation of 'politics' and 'culture' that are of great importance.

It will soon be apparent that I admire Clarendon. So I had better make plain at the start that I am aware of his limitations, as no one with the slightest knowledge of the period can fail to be. He certainly does not give us a complete picture of the Civil War and its causes. He was a constitutional royalist, a churchman, and a lawyer, with a great respect for precedent. He was critical of the personal administration of Charles I, and severely critical of his court. He approved of much of the legislation of the first session of the Long Parliament, that limited the arbitrary power of the Crown. He was a severe judge of the unruly faction and self-seeking that contributed so largely to the failure of the royal cause. But we look in vain in the History for any recognition of the deeper motives that united large masses of men in fundamental opposition to King and bishop. He was completely unaware of the widespread shift in economic power that gave significance to the parliamentary slogan, 'Property and liberty'. He had no understanding of the sober strength of Puritanism: he saw only its fanatical and intolerant side. He can describe the 'discipline diligence and sobriety' of the parliamentary armies or the spontaneous opposition of common people to the royalist armies in different parts of the country, and yet show no sign of recognizing that these are matters requiring some explanation. We may agree that the rebellion was directed by a very small number of men—'the great managers', as he calls them—but it could not have been in any degree successful without mass support. It was not *simply* brought about—as Clarendon often implies—by a handful of men 'who had the skill and cunning out of froward and ambitious

[1]A paper originally prepared for the Cambridge University English Club.

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humours and indispositions to compound fears and jealousies'. Much less was it merely—as Clarendon in one place calls it—a 'strange wild fire among the people'.

If, in spite of these limitations, the *History of the Rebellion* is one of the great books of the seventeenth century, it is because of certain qualities of mind that Clarendon brought to his task. These qualities of mind, implicit in Clarendon's handling of his material, form the starting-point of my reflections.

It is by his character-sketches—essays in a favourite seventeenth-century genre—that he is best known, and they are justly famous. 'Each of them', says Sir James Stephen, 'shows how closely and with what searching curiosity he examined and revolved in his mind any fact which interested him. Everyone, his dearest friend, his bitterest enemy, the objects of his deepest contempt and of his highest admiration, are all passed through the same crucible. He looks into them with all the curiosity of a modern novelist'.[2] And Professor Nichol Smith: 'All his characters are clearly defined. We never confound them; we never have any doubt of how he understood them. He sees men as a whole before he begins to describe them . . . He does not build up his characters. He does not, as many others do, start with the external features in the hope of arriving at the central facts. He starts from the centre and works outwards. This is the reason of the convincingness of his characters, their dramatic truth'.[3] What interests Clarendon is the essential bent of a man's mind, the motives that, ingrained in character, issue in significant action. He does not simplify. He has a special relish in revealing inconsistencies and in reconciling them. Each of his characters is judged; there is an explicit or implicit moral evaluation. The judgment is not always, we may feel, a fair one; but it is always based on Clarendon's own sense of the person. It is not—or not as a rule—imposed; it issues from a cultivated awareness in which moral taste and psychological acumen are combined.

For my purpose it is important that you should have before you some examples of the analytic power of which I have spoken. I have chosen two short sketches and two extracts from longer studies, that will illustrate Clarendon's skill in handling diverse material.

The first is Attorney-general Noy:

> 'The first, upon the great fame of his ability and learning, (and very able and learned he was), was by great industry and importunity from Court persuaded to accept that place for which all other men laboured . . . and so he suffered himself to be made the King's Attorney-general. The Court made no impression upon his manners; upon his mind it did: and though he wore

[2] *Horae Sabbaticae*. First Series, p. 314.

[3] *Characters from the Histories and Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century*, 'Essay on the Character', p. 13.

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about him an affected morosity which made him unapt to flatter other men, yet even that morosity and pride rendered him the most liable to be grossly flattered himself that can be imagined. And by this means the great persons who steered the public affairs, by admiring his parts and extolling his judgment as well to his face as behind his back, wrought upon him by degrees, for the eminency of the service, to be an instrument in all their designs; thinking that he could not give a clearer testimony that his knowledge in the law was greater than all other men's, than by making that law which all other men believed not to be so. So he moulded, framed, and pursued the odious and crying project of soap, and with his own hand drew and prepared the writ for ship-money, both of which will be the lasting monuments of his fame. In a word, he was an unanswerable instance how necessary a good education and knowledge of men is to make a wise man, at least a man fit for business'. [I, 157].[4]

Beside this we may put the portrait of another honest man who also, in Clarendon's view, lacked certain necessary qualities of self-knowledge. Of the parliamentary general, the Earl of Essex, he writes:

' . . . it shall suffice in this place to say, that a weak judgment, and a little vanity, and as much of pride, will hurry a man into as unwarrantable and as violent attempts as the greatest and most unlimited and insatiable ambition will do. He had no ambition of title, or office, or preferment, but only to be kindly spoken to, and quietly to enjoy his own fortune: and, without doubt, no man in his nature more abhorred rebellion than he did, nor could he have been led into it by any open or transparent temptation but by a thousand disguises and cozenages. His pride supplied his want of ambition, and he was angry to see any other man more respected than himself, because he thought he deserved it more, and did better requite it. For he was in his friendships just and constant, and would not have practised foully against those he took to be enemies. No man had credit enough with him to corrupt him in point of loyalty to the King whilst he thought himself wise enough to know what treason was. But the new doctrine and distinction of allegiance, and of the King's power in and out of Parliament, and the new notions of ordinances, were too hard for him, and did really intoxicate his understanding, and made him quit his own to follow theirs who he thought wished as well and judged better than himself. His vanity disposed him to be *His Excellence*, and his weakness to believe that he should be general in the Houses as well as in the field, and be able to govern their counsels and restrain their passions as well as to fight their battles; and that by this means he should become the preserver, and not the destroyer, of the

[4]References are to the book and paragraph of the *History* in Macray's edition.

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> King and kingdom. And with this ill-grounded confidence he launched out into that sea where he met with nothing but rocks and shelves, and from whence he could never discover any safe port to harbour in'. [VI, 402].

That may not be the actual Essex, but it is a portrait of someone who certainly might have existed. The picture of Laud exhibits a quite different blend of flaws and virtues. The main lines of his character are given in a few sentences:

> 'He was a man of great courage and resolution, and being most assured within himself that he proposed no end in all his actions or designs than what was pious and just (as sure no man had ever a heart more entire to the King, the Church, or his country), he never studied the best ways to those ends; he thought, it may be, that any art or industry that way would discredit, at least make the integrity of the end suspected. Let the cause be what it will, he did court persons too little; nor cared to make his designs and purposes appear as candid as they were by shewing them in any other dress than their own natural beauty and roughness'. [I, 196].

My last example—part of the study of Lord Digby—offers a marked contrast to the stubborn integrity of Laud.

> 'He was a man of very extraordinary parts by nature and art, and had surely as good and excellent an education as any man of that age in any country: a graceful and beautiful person; of great eloquence and becomingness in his discourse (save that sometimes he seemed a little affected), and of so universal a knowledge that he never wanted subject for a discourse: he was equal to a very good part in the greatest affair, but the unfittest man alive to conduct it, having an ambition and vanity superior to all his other parts, and a confidence peculiar to himself, which sometimes intoxicated and transported him . . .
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> 'He had been instrumental in promoting the three persons above mentioned [Hyde, Culpepper and Falkland] to the King's favour, and had himself, in truth, so great an esteem of them that he did very frequently, upon conference together, depart from his own inclinations and opinions and concurred in theirs; and very few men of so great parts are upon all occasions, more counsellable than he; so that he would seldom be in danger of running into great errors if he would communicate and expose all his own thoughts and inclinations to such a disquisition; nor is he uninclinable in his nature to such an entire communication in all things which he conceives to be difficult. But his fatal infirmity is that he too often thinks difficult things very easy; and doth not consider possible consequences when the proposition administers somewhat that is delightful to his fancy, and by pursuing whereof he imagines he shall reap some glory to himself, of which he is immoderately ambitious; so that, if the consultation be upon any action to be done, no man more

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implicitly enters into that debate, or more cheerfully resigns his own conceptions to a joint determination: but when it is once affirmatively resolved (besides that he may possibly reserve some impertinent circumstance, as he thinks, the imparting whereof would change the nature of the thing), if his fancy suggests to him any particular which himself might perform in that action, upon the imagination that everybody would approve it if it were proposed to them he chooses rather to do it than to communicate, that he may have some signal part to himself in the transaction in which no other person can claim a share. And by this unhappy temper he did often involve himself in very unprosperous attempts'. [IV, 127, 128].

To which may be added a sentence from a later volume (Digby, defeated in battle, is about to retire to Ireland):

'And the temper and composition of his mind was so admirable, that he was always more pleased and delighted that he had advanced so far, which he imputed to his virtue and conduct, than broken or dejected that his success was not answerable, which he still charged upon second causes, for which he could not be accountable'. [IX, 126].[5]

'Characters' such as these can be read with pleasure in isolation, but they lose something by being detached from their context and from each other. Some of them are set pieces, but the kind of interest they represent is pervasive throughout the History. There are frequent observations made in passing that show the student of human nature.

'Upon these and other motives, besides the natural credulity in men, in believing all they wished to be true, the King was prevailed with . . . '

' . . . revenge, which is a guest that naturally disquiets and tortures those who entertain it with all the perplexities they contrive for others'.

'Mr. Jermin, who still valued himself upon the impossible faculty to please all and displease none . . . '

'Mr. L'Estrange spake to them in a style very much his own, and being not very clear to be understood, the more prevailed over them'.

'He so far prevailed with his highness, who would have been more choleric if he had had less right on his side . . . '

[5] *Cf.* also X, 13: 'He was a person of so rare a composition by nature and by art (for nature alone could never have reached to it), that he was so far from being ever dismayed upon any misfortune, (and greater variety of misfortunes never befell any man), that he quickly recollected himself so vigorously, that he did really believe his condition to be improved by that ill accident, and that he had an opportunity thereby to gain a new stock of reputation and honour'.

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It is part of Clarendon's success that, by displaying events in a context of pondered personal comment, he can make us feel the complex pressure of the actual.

The characters, then, are integral to the History as a whole, and when we have understood the relation between Clarendon's attitude to persons and his attitude to events we may begin to understand the nature of that wisdom that makes the *History of the Rebellion* so much more than a source book for the period. What is it, we may ask, that gives so many of Clarendon's utterances on politics that weight which—whether or not we agree with his general position—we must allow them? It is partly, of course, the actual experience of affairs. Clarendon knows from direct observation how men behave in politics. When he speaks of 'that fathomless abyss of Reasons of State', or when he says of a certain Earl ('much addicted to the mathematics') that 'he was in truth rather a speculative than a practical man, and expected a greater certitude in the consultation of business than the business of this world is capable of'; or when he remarks that, 'the nature of men, especially of men in authority, is inclined rather to commit two errors than to retract one', we know that he is speaking out of his own experience. But it is not merely that Clarendon the historian possesses the acumen of Clarendon the statesman. There is a passage in Book VII concerning the utility of general councils that may illustrate my meaning.

> 'And I cannot but on this occasion continue this digression thus much farther, to observe, that they who avoid public debates in Council, or think them of less moment, upon the undervaluing the persons of the councillors, and from the particular infirmities of men, the heaviness of this man, the levity of that, the weakness and simplicity of a third, conclude that their advice and opinions are not requisite to any great design, are exceedingly deceived, and will perniciously deceive others who are misled by those conclusions. For it is in wisdom as it is in beauty. A face that, being taken in pieces, affords scarce one exact feature, an eye, or a nose, or a tooth, or a brow, or a mouth, against which a visible just exception cannot be taken, yet altogether, by a gracefulness and vivacity in the whole, may constitute an excellent beauty, and be more catching than another whose symmetry is more faultless. So there are many men, who in this particular argument may be unskilful, in that affected, who may seem to have levity, or vanity, or formality, in ordinary cursory conversation (a very crooked rule to measure men's abilities, and gives a better evidence of the nature than of the understanding), and yet in formed counsels, deliberations, and transactions, are men of great insight and wisdom, and from whom excellent assistance is contributed.
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> 'And, no question, all great enterprises and designs that are to be executed have many parts, even in the projection, fit for the survey and disquisition of several faculties and abilities, and

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equally for the decision of sharper and more phlegmatic understandings. And we often hear in debates of great moment animadversions of more weight and consequence from those whose ordinary conversation is not so delightful, than from men of more sublime parts. Certainly Solomon very well understood himself when he said, "*In the multitude of counsellors there is safety*". And though it were confessed that reason would be better stated and discovered, and conclusions easier made, by a few than a greater number, yet when the execution depends on many, and the general interpretation so much depends on the success, and the success on the interpretation, we see those counsels most prosperous whereof the considerations and deliberations have been measured by that standard which is most publicly received and acknowledged'. [VII, 280-281].

Here, we may say, is political wisdom springing from a life-time of political experience. True; but my point is that it is more than *political* wisdom. From the theory of general councils Clarendon turns to the actual divisions within the King's Court at Oxford, to the factions, envy and egotism that prevented the emergence of a common will. In these circumstances, he said, it was very hard for a minister, exposed to envy on all sides, to achieve the necessary 'patience, temper and dexterity'; and he continues:

'The best provision that such men can make for their voyage, besides a stock of innocence that cannot be impaired, and a firm confidence in God Almighty that he will never suffer that innocence to be utterly oppressed or notoriously infamed, is, an expectation of those gusts and storms of rumour, detraction and envy; and a resolution not to be over sensible of all calumnies, unkindness, or injustice, but to believe that, by being preferred before other men, they have an obligation upon them to suffer more than other men would do, and that the best way to convince scandals and misreports is, by neglecting them, to appear not to have deserved them. And there is not a more troublesome inconvenient passion, or that which often draws more inconveniences with it, than that which proceeds from the indignation of being unjustly calumniated, and from the pride of an upright conscience, when men cannot endure to be spoken ill of when they have not deserved it: in which distemper, though they free themselves from the errors or infirmities with which they were traduced, they commonly discover others of which they had never been suspected'. [VII, 283].

This is *moral* wisdom; and it underlies—is one with—the political wisdom. It is this, I think, that constitutes Clarendon's greatness as an historian: that there is a constant reference beyond politics—beyond, that is, the conflict of forces—to the human ground.

We touch here on Clarendon's representative significance. The wisdom expressed in the passages I have quoted grows not simply out of 'politics' but out of 'culture': it is not merely a result of

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reading—though Clarendon had read widely in the classics; it is the product of a civilized tradition and of habits of civilized intercourse. We may return to the observations of character and motive. What is shown by Clarendon's firm grasp of the personal factor in history and his shrewd and subtle appraisal of character, is that he was the product of a society within which there was a highly developed sense of the person, a society for which personal and moral issues mattered, and which possessed a language in which these issues could be intelligently discussed.[6]

That, I think, is an observation that it is open to anyone to make with some assurance. There remains a need for a full scholarly study of Clarendon's milieu—of the milieu sketched in the opening chapters of his *Life*. There was the early acquaintance with Ben Jonson, Selden, Cotton, Thomas Carew and others—a London circle of scholars, poets, and wits. There was the later more intimate friendship with Falkland and the group that gathered at Great Tew —that 'college situated in a purer air': Sheldon, Morley, Earle, Hales, and Chillingworth, amongst others. Such a study would certainly establish the very great variety of interests and aptitudes represented in the circles that Clarendon frequented—poetry, history, law, philosophy, theology, and public affairs.[7] The Falkland group has of course a very special significance: it was not only a centre of humane learning, it was *the* centre of what—if we define our terms—we may call 'religious liberalism'.[8] The liberalism of these men was not so much a matter of 'advanced' theological views (they were devout and convinced members of the Church of England) as of a temper of mind and an attitude towards the important theological and ecclesiastical questions then in debate. Clarendon tells us of Falkland that 'he was so great an enemy to

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[6]Clarendon's style in the character studies is invariably firm as well as subtle, displaying none of that awkwardness that occasionally marks the more purely narrative portions of his history. Clarendon's appraisal of public figures normally includes some reference not only to their learning, or lack of it, but to their skill in 'discourse'.

[7]'Mr. Earles would frequently profess that he had got more useful learning by his conversation at Tew (the Lord Falkland's house) than he had at Oxford'. *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon, written by Himself*, edition of 1759, Vol. I, p. 51. *Characters of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nichol Smith, p. 169.

[8]'There are few more curious problems in English history than that which these facts suggest. Why was it that religious liberalism in the seventeenth century was allied with political Toryism, whilst the most bigoted and narrow views of religion were held by the founders of our political liberties? We cannot at present enter upon this enquiry; but, in order to understand Clarendon, it is necessary to be aware of its existence, and to know that, though the highest of high Tories, he was anything but a bigot'—Sir James Stephen, *Horae Sabbaticae*, First Series, p. 319.

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that passion and uncharitableness which he saw produced by differences of opinion in matters of religion, that in all those disputations with priests and others of the Roman Church, he affected to manifest all possible civility to their persons and estimation of their parts'. [VII, 221]. 'In all those controversies, he had so dispassioned a consideration, such a candour in his nature, and so profound a charity in his conscience, that in those points in which he was in his own judgment most clear, he never thought the worse, or in any degree declined the familiarity of those who were of another mind, which without question is an excellent temper for the propagation and advancement of Christianity'.[9] Of Hales we read: 'Nothing troubled him more than the brawls which were grown from religion, and he therefore exceedingly detested the tyranny of the Church of Rome, more for their imposing uncharitably upon the consciences of other men, than for their errors in their own opinions, and would often say, that he would renounce the religion of the Church of England tomorrow if it obliged him to believe that any other Christians should be damned: and that nobody would conclude another man to be damned, who did not wish him so: . . . and he thought that pride and passion more than conscience were the cause of all separation from each others communion'.[10] Moderation of this kind, based on conviction, is as far removed from indifference as it is from fanaticism. It is a similar moderation and humanity that displays itself in what we know of the political attitudes of Falkland and his friends. None of them was a violent partisan. 'When there was any overture of peace, he (Falkland) would be more erect, and vigorous, and exceedingly solicitous to press any thing which he thought might promote it' [VII, 233]. It was Chillingworth who, preaching before the Court at Oxford, described the contending parties as 'Publicans and Sinners on the one side against Scribes and Pharisees on the other'.[11] It is to the significance of this circle that the *History of the Rebellion*—regarded not simply as a history but as a document of the moral sensibility of the age—may direct our attention.

The *History of the Rebellion*, then, is an important document in the history of English civilization in the seventeenth century. But it is more than a document: it has an actual value. What its value for the present is, I think we may see if we put beside it a very different but in some ways comparable book, *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky. Trotsky, like Clarendon, describes the genesis and course of great events in which he was one of the leading actors; and although his bias—like Clarendon's—is not in doubt, he too intended the book as a contribution to

[9] *Life*, Vo. I, p. 43. *Characters of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 93.
[10] *Life*, Vol. I, p. 53. *Characters of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 172.
[11] J. A. R. Marriott, *The Life and Times of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland*, p. 248. Marriott also quotes Fuller, preaching in London: 'Think not that the King's army is like Sodom, not ten righteous men in it, and the other army like Zion, consisting all of saints'.

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serious history. The differences in method and approach are revealing. Trotsky, like Marx, from whom his historical method is derived, is clearly the product of an age dominated by the idea of scientific law. His vigorous intellect works in terms of masses and social forces, and the slightest fluctuation in the main course of events is caught and pinned into place as a logically necessary exception.[12] If we feel that Clarendon sometimes mistakenly attributes representative acts to purely personal motives, in reading Trotsky we are constantly aware of the absence of the personal—especially of the irrational, or non-rational—motives that certainly played a part in the actions he describes.[13] Nor is there a single person—not even Lenin—who appears in the book as anything more than a bloodless embodiment of political will or of some social category. The result is that although the *History of the Russian Revolution* is packed with detail the total effect is of something abstract and schematized. One cannot resist the conclusion that the pattern, so vigorously asserted in its complex detail, is to a large extent imposed.

The question here is not which of our two historians was more 'correct' in his analysis of political problems. In Clarendon's day, as in Trotsky's, men contested with passion for their own ideas of the best forms of government. They will continue to contest, and there is no means of securing uniformity of opinion. The question on which we might hope to secure some measure of agreement from men of different parties concerns the *relation* of political thinking to the general life of the community. Of any analyst of politics, as of any political leader, we may ask, What are the implications of his habitual modes of thought in terms of that wider human life, which only from one angle appears as political life? For Trotsky, analysis of past events is plainly a tool to be used in shaping the future. 'Revolutions', he says, 'take place according to certain laws. This does not mean that the masses in action are aware of the laws of revolution, but it does mean that the changes in mass consciousness are not accidental, but are subject to an objective necessity which is capable of theoretic explanation, *and*

[12]Characteristic phrases are, 'the law of combined development'. 'shifts in the correlation of class forces', 'the molecular process in the masses', 'the inevitable dynamic of a revolutionary process', 'the resultant of the composition of forces'. 'What distinguished Bolshevism was that it subordinated the subjective (*sic*) goal, the defence of the interests of the popular masses, to the laws of revolution as an objectively conditioned process. The scientific discovery of these laws, and first of all those which govern the movement of popular masses, constituted the basis of the Bolshevik strategy'.—*The History of the Russian Revolution*, translated by Max Eastman, Vol. II, p. 309.

[13]As an analyst of crowd behaviour he could have learnt something from the account of the Milan bread riots in Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*.

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thus makes both prophecy and leadership possible'. [Vol. II, p. 10]. Now if the analysis is partial, in the sense that only data of a certain kind pass through the sieve, the 'prophecy' and the 'leadership' are equally suspect. Occasionally Trotsky lets the cat out of the bag. 'The proletariat was the chief motive force of the Revolution', he says. 'At the same time the revolution was giving shape to the proletariat. And the proletariat was badly in need of this'. [Vol. I, p. 426]. Substitute for the abstraction, 'the revolution', the more specific term, 'the party agitators' (as is plain from the immediately following pages we are entitled to do) and the scientific bluff is called. Similar sleights are not infrequent. 'It would seem as though the soviets, elected by a part of the city's population, should have less power and influence than the dumas, elected by the whole population. But the dialectic of the revolutionary process has demonstrated that in certain historic conditions the part is incomparably greater than the whole' [Vol. II, p. 303]. And in the concluding chapters of the History there are some revealing passages on the difference between 'formal democracy' (*sc.* democracy) and 'authentic democracy' (*sc.* the Party dictatorship). Such passages, which Clarendon would have considered an abuse of reason, reveal fully the wider implications of which I have spoken. The blindness to everything in life but some schematized abstractions is the disease of a mind that thinks solely in terms of power and that therefore, of necessity, propagates the idea of power as the sole concern of political man. Trotsky is the embodiment of political will masquerading as destiny or impersonal law.[14]

Civilization and its products are in some ways analogous to the organic processes of nature. The humus of civilization—the worked top soil—is composed of attitudes, interests, moral judgments, habits of perception and response. Like the actual humus, this soil needs to be kept 'in good heart' if new growth is to occur; it can be impoverished, and it can be destroyed. Those who elect to discuss man's collective life have therefore a responsibility over and above their responsibility as recorders of events

[14]'In practice', Trotsky writes, 'a reformist party considers unshakable the foundations of that which it intends to reform. It thus inevitably submits to the ideas and morals of the ruling class . . . Bolshevism created the type of the authentic revolutionary who subordinates to historic goals irreconcilable with contemporary society the conditions of his personal existence, his ideas, and his moral judgments [Vol. III, p. 166]. That sounds very fine. Unfortunately the 'historic goals' that sound so solid are in fact nothing more than goals existing in the minds of those who proclaim them. When they are invoked to absolve men from the need for personal moral judgment, there is little need to speculate concerning the impulses that rush in to fill the void thus created. I should like to refer my reader to Mr. G. H. Bantock's essay, *The Cultural Implications of Planning and Popularization*, in this journal [Vol. XIV, No. 3], especially to his comments on pp. 174-175.

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or promulgators of a point of view. When an influential political writer, by his underlying assumptions no less than by his overt judgments, commits himself to a view in which 'everything includes itself in power, power into will', he is destroying the very basis of any future good to which he may pay lip-service; he impoverishes the soil and debilitates the future. When he is not only an influential writer but a political leader and a representative political type, one may in all seriousness begin to think in terms of cultural erosion.

Considerations such as these may help to focus the present relevance of an historian who is sometimes dubbed, in the slack modern phrase, a reactionary. In the way in which Clarendon wrote about politics he helped to keep alive attitudes and habits of mind that are, in the long run, more important than any programme. We value him less for his political conclusions than for the manner of his approach to those conclusions. He believed in certain intellectual and moral principles, 'and integrity above all'.[15] He had a genuine humility in the face of events, not expecting 'a greater certitude in the consultation of business than the business of this world is capable of'. Above all, he had a keen and profound sense of the person, even of his opponents as persons, not simply as representatives of a category. For these reasons, as I have tried to show, he is a source of political wisdom of a kind not easily come by. That we may often disagree with his judgments does not matter. What matters is that we should be aware of the qualities—inherent in the handling of his material—that were to contribute to the more lasting achievements of civilization long after the political cause that he supported was lost. To be responsive to such qualities, and ourselves to foster such qualities in our political thinking, offers the only alternative to a progressive deterioration of public life to which those who are concerned for personal values cannot afford to be indifferent.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

[15] 'And though it hath been, and will be, always necessary to admit to those Councils some men of great power that will not take the pains to have great parts, yet the number of the whole should not be too great, and the capacities and qualities of the most should be fit for business; that is, either for judgment or despatch, or for one of them at least; and integrity above all' [III, 53].

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HENRY IV—PART II

THE change in tone and attitude which makes itself felt as we pass from the First to the Second Part of *Henry IV* is among the most significant in Shakespeare. It implies a development in the author's approach to his material which is intimately associated with the growth of the tragic experience. The existence of this growth makes itself felt repeatedly in a new quality in the verse of the play. It is notable that the critic dealing with *Henry IV—Part I* barely has to consider linguistic quality and verse structure at all. The poetic forms with which he is dealing, though less formally, artificially conceived than in *Richard II*, are still mainly those of the early Shakespeare; the rhythmic patterns are still of an elementary kind and the conventional machinery of verse structure is still prominent to a degree that would never have been tolerated in the great tragedies. In the Second Part of *Henry IV*, however, although the formal devices are still prominent—as they are in other plays belonging to this period, and notably in *Troilus and Cressida*—there is a feeling that the poet is reaching out through them to new elaborations of experience. This feeling is neither continuous nor perfectly realized; but it certainly exists, and perhaps does as much as anything to differentiate the play from its predecessors. The verse of *Henry IV—Part II*, in its most characteristic moments, is no longer merely a development of statements following the normal oratorical pattern of blank verse. It aims, however obscurely and imperfectly, at a new kind of poetry in which verse shall be, not merely a consecutive statement, but an attempt to catch the shifts and tensions of the poetic consciousness as it strains to express through the mouths of the various characters the complexity, the possible contradictions of a particular experience.

In *Henry IV—Part II* there are moments when, by close reading of apparently commonplace and even confused lines, the effort to create an instrument for the expression of this new poetic purpose can be caught in the very process of elaboration. Such is the following reference of Morton to the part played by Hotspur in the recent battle of Shrewsbury:

> For from his metal was his party steel'd;
> Which once in him abated, all the rest
> Turn'd on themselves, like dull and heavy lead:
> And as the thing that's heavy in itself,
> Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,
> So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,
> Lend to their weight such lightness with their fear,
> That arrows fled not swifter towards their aim
> Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,
> Fly from the field. (I, i).

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It is difficult to read verse of this kind without feeling, as we feel continuously in *Troilus and Cressida*, that two distinct purposes are, so to speak, superimposed upon one another and imperfectly fused into a poetic unity. The first of these purposes is purely formal, the development of an extended comparison to its logical and foreseen conclusion; the second, springing apparently by chance from an idea contained in the simile, deviates the unfolding of the parallel from its fixed course, imposes itself more immediately by a linguistic force which aims at becoming its own justification. The passage opens with what must have been, for Shakespeare, a commonplace of quasi-scientific observation. The description of Hotspur's influence upon his followers in terms of the 'steeling' power of his personal courage or 'metal' follows lines completely familiar until the reference, itself provoked by 'metal', to 'dull and heavy lead' introduces a new and more involved line of thought; the word 'heavy', caught up and repeated in the fourth line, brings up the general physical principle that 'enforcement', physical compulsion, combined with weight produces a corresponding speed in motion. This speed is in turn associated with the rout of the rebel party after Hotspur's death. 'Heavy' in their loss, the 'weight' of their sorrow produces by a verbal paradox the lightness of fear, and this idea in turn brings us back to the original image with which the comparison opened. As arrows—impelled, it is understood, by their weight—'fly' with light swiftness to the target at which they have been aimed (Shakespeare, anticipating the rout of the rebel army, makes the arrows *flee* towards their goal, whilst the soldiers a little later fly from it), so were the men of the rebel army, weighed down by the loss of the inspiration of their captain, impelled to seek safety in the swiftness of flight.

The importance of similes of this kind, in which the play abounds, is not immediately apparent. It lies not in their poetic qualities—which are in most cases slight—but in the fact that they represent the creation by Shakespeare of a poetic instrument adequate to the growing complexity of his intentions. They can fairly be described as the scaffolding upon which the later poetry was constructed, exercises which helped to ensure that, when the great floods of associated ideas which characterize the work of his maturity came to demand expression, his verse forms should not buckle and break into incoherence under the strain. There are moments in the play when the working-out of these extended similes can be caught in closer relationship to a true artistic conception. Such is the case with the speech of Northumberland when, in the opening scene, he receives news of the defeat of his party at Shrewsbury:

> In poison there is physic; and these news,
> Having been well, that would have made me sick,
> Being sick have in some measure made me well;
> And as the wretch, whose fever-weaken'd joints,
> Like strengthless hinges, buckle under fire

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> Out of his keeper's arms, even so my limbs,
> Weaken'd with grief, being now enraged with grief,
> Are thrice themselves. (I, i).

The verse is, in ancestry, still clearly that of the early Shakespeare. It recalls the use of neat antitheses, mathematically rather than emotionally opposed, which is characteristic of *Romeo* and *Richard II*; but there are suggestions that these antitheses, no longer mere literary devices in which verbal dexterity predominates, are being used both to indicate the speaker's state of mind and to relate him to a situation which, in its confusion and complexity, transcends the merely personal. The first aim is to convey, through a significant fumbling with confused ideas, the hesitation in Northumberland's own mind; the second is to relate this hesitation to what will eventually emerge as the prevailing mood in which the play is conceived. Both purposes are reflected in the thread of imagery derived from health and sickness which runs through the whole speech. The tragic disharmony present in the speaker is apparent in the contrast between the feverish energy which makes his limbs 'thrice themselves' and the underlying note of senility and despair conveyed by 'weaken'd' and the suggestion of fever implied in 'fire'. Still more intimately related to the main conception are the lines in which the speaker, overtaken by a catastrophe which is in fact beyond his weakened powers of reaction, juggles with words in a vain attempt to produce the illusion of comfort. Good news would have made him 'sick', whereas bad news (he tries to believe) is on the way to making him well. By the use here of something which already foreshadows the compressed and contorted syntax of the tragedies, Shakespeare relates Northumberland's own condition to something more universal than itself. The words 'well' and 'sick', as he uses them, refer at different moments to the speaker and to the bad news he has just received, for both are discussed in terms of health and sickness. The individual and the external situation are thus felt to be caught up in a common malady, a fundamental blight of which the old man himself is little more than the symptom. The result is a remarkable effect which can in turn be described in terms of dramatic presentation. A comparison of Northumberland with an earlier study in vacillation, that of York in *Richard II*, will show how Shakespeare, with his advance in poetic scope, has gained solidity and actuality by the introduction of this tragic note.

Behind these new developments lies a more complete sense of the unity which should knit together the various elements of the drama. Northumberland differs from York and even from the rebel leaders in the preceding play in being more than a character simply to be observed and analysed. He is an organic part of the poetic creation into which Shakespeare was now projecting his experience, and his individuality is to some extent conditioned by its relation to every other part of that creation; that, at least, is the ideal towards which the poet was already tending. The disunity

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in his mind, for instance, is related to similar defects in the conduct by the rebels of their whole campaign. Feverishly bold in the moment of despair, he abstains when the time for action comes from the cause to which he is now hopelessly committed; whilst his fellow rebels, whose only hope, as Mowbray warns them (IV, i), lies in determined action and complete victory, surrender without a blow to the cunning of Lancaster and Westmoreland. These divisions are doubles of incidents already used in *Part I*, but they here acquire a new significance. The rebels of *Part II* are no longer primarily crafty and short-sighted politicians, engaged for motives in which selfishness prevails upon an adventure intrinsically evil and bearing within itself the seeds of retribution. The emphasis now is hardly upon responsibility at all. Northumberland, The Archbishop of York, and the dim figures who share with them the political action of the play, are not, like Hotspur and Douglas, active and impetuous leaders; nor are they even particularly crafty, as Worcester had been, or, like Glendower, opinionated and vain. Their personal characteristics, such as they are, have been relegated by their creator to the background; like Northumberland, though in varying degrees, they are old and disillusioned shadows, men palsied by fear and uncertainty, and no longer in control of the flow of events which pushes them on to conclusions only foreseen as disastrous.

The blight, moreover, now falls impartially upon both parties. The emphasis, which had still lain in *Part I* on the clash of conflicting wills and interests, is now rather upon common helplessness. The King himself, vastly changed from the politician and man of action represented by Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, has lost in this play most of his sense of political vocation and with it most of the practical attributes he still showed in *Part I*. The loss is, in the last analysis, a loss of interest. Old and sick now, the fundamental division noted in *Part I* between his distant aspiration for just and unsullied kingship and a present sense of his usurpation as a continual source of rebellion has now assumed a definitely tragic quality. The enterprises planned in the earlier part of his reign have all remained without fulfilment. Accepting this frustration as part of the nature of things, Henry's strongest emotion has now become a nostalgia for peace and sleep. This nostalgia is born, typically enough, less of immediate political experience than of a sense of the continual and meaningless procession of events beyond human control:

> O God, that one might read the book of fate
> And see the revolution of the times
> Make mountains level, and the continent,
> Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
> Into the sea! (III, i).

In these lines, steeped in emotion of a kind hitherto unachieved by Shakespeare, there prevails what is now Henry's chief desire, the wish to abandon his political responsibilities. To appreciate how

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closely this weariness with 'solid firmness' and this sense of the impersonality of time are connected with the general development of his work, we need only refer to certain moments in *Hamlet*—'O that this too, too solid flesh would melt'—and to the Sonnets; many of these use similar language and turn upon precisely the same themes. For the moment it is enough to say that the spirit of these lines dominates both parties in this play. Loyalists and rebels have become, not merely acute political studies, but complementary aspects of a poetic universe created by Shakespeare and unified by the power of his growing personal vision.

The relationship thus briefly outlined between the two contending parties is associated with certain recurrent themes which bind the plot together. The presence of these themes, intermittent and elementary though it is, is still suggestive in the light of later developments, especially in *Troilus and Cressida*. Most important of them all perhaps is an insistent preoccupation with Time. The operation of Time in this play subjects human motives and interests to a force essentially out of all possibility of ordering or control. Northumberland, in his feverish reaction to the news of Shrewsbury, tells the Lord Bardolph—

> The times are wild; contention, like a horse
> Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
> And bears all down before him (I, i),

whilst, towards the end of the political action the Archbishop of York refers to 'the time misordered' which, imposing itself through the elementary instinct of survival, 'doth crowd and crush' the rebel party to 'the monstruous form' of revolt. Allied, in fact, to the idea of Time in this play is the conception of over-ruling necessity. Warwick, replying to the King's weary reflections upon the endless chain of revolts which have marked the course of his reign, sees in them a pattern or 'necessary form' by which foreknowledge of the future may be derived from past experience; to which Henry replies:

> Are these things, then, necessities?
> Then let us meet them like necessities (III, i),

a conception of political events in their relation to individual helplessness which is echoed a little later by Westmoreland in his advice to Mowbray:

> Construe the times to their necessities,
> And you shall say, indeed, it is the time,
> And not the King, that doth you injuries (IV, i).

Necessity, then, is a fact generally accepted by all the political characters in this play, the young and successful not less than the old and disillusioned. All are 'time's subjects' (I, iii); the main difference is between those who are driven to despair or inaction by a recognition of this fact, and those who are prepared to accept the conditions imposed upon them by reality to achieve the success which is their only ambition.

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In spite, however, of the presence in *Henry IV—Part II* of successful men of action, the prevailing mood is one of disorder and dislocation. We have seen this mood expressed in an early speech by Northumberland; it is remarkable that his words are closely echoed by King Henry, now also an old man, very shortly before his death:

> And wherefore should these good news make me sick?
> Will Fortune never come with both hands full,
> But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
> She either gives a stomach, and no food,—
> Such are the poor, in health; or else a feast,
> And takes away the stomach,—such are the rich (IV, iv).

In this play, as in *Troilus and Cressida*, the prevailing sense of disorder is often associated with organic irregularity and sickness. Imagery of this type extends from the individual to embrace the state. England is constantly spoken of as an unhealthy body in need of a drastic purge; a body whose condition indeed may be beyond cure. The Archbishop tells his fellow-conspirators that:

> The commonwealth is sick of their own choice (I, iii),

and applies the image at length. He also repeats it more explicitly in his parley with Westmoreland:

> we are all diseased;
> And with our surfeiting and wanton hours
> Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,
> And we must bleed for it. (IV, i).

On the other side the King remarks to Warwick:

> Then you perceive the body of our kingdom
> How foul it is; what rank diseases grow,
> And with what danger, near the heart of it. (III, i).

The English state is the universe of this play, and its disease is a disunion within that universe: a disunion which transcends mere political divisions and proceeds, in the last analysis, from elements still largely obscure in the author's own experience. We may say, if we will, that in images of this kind the problem of political unity, or 'degree', and that of personal order are being brought into the closest relationship. Just as the state is regarded in its divisions as a diseased body ravaged by a consuming fever, so is the individual torn between the violence of his passions and the direction of reason; and just as the political remedy lies in an unquestioned allegiance to authority divinely constituted, so does personal coherence depend upon the submission to reason of our uncontrolled desires. In *Henry IV—Part II*, however, the disease, the sense of disunity, is far more evident than the possible remedy, the submission to rule; in fact the consequences of submission, with its accompanying problems, have yet to be seriously posed in a

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political organism whose infirmities, though clearly acute, are still far from defined in the utterances of those who compose it. The characters involved in the political action are, indeed, essentially victims. Their war-like actions are—to adopt once more the conceptions of the Archbishop—efforts to

> diet rank minds sick of happiness,
> And purge the obstructions which begin to stop
> Our very veins of life (IV, i);

but the final impression is not really one of personal responsibility. From disease to the aged impotence of Northumberland and the King is an easy step, and so the infirmity itself is connected with the evident disharmony between man and circumstance, between action and indecision which, like so much in this play, is indicative of the growth of the tragic mood.

This new sense of tragic depth is accompanied by a further insight into the possibilities of the main political theme. The conception with which Shakespeare embarked upon this series of plays, profoundly modified in the working out of its various stages, has reached in *Part II* a further decisive moment. The original presentation of monarchy as the necessary guarantee of order in a world where human experience can still aspire to value and significance continues to be valid for *Henry IV—Part II*; it might even be said that its validity has been strengthened by a growing association of the political with the personal order, by the presence of deepening individual needs seeking expression through the political symbol. What has changed is the presentation of the conception of kingship in relation to political realities. The responsibilities abdicated by Henry are taken over by Prince Hal and his more disagreeable echo, John of Lancaster, representatives of a new generation for which political success has become the sufficient end of existence. The attitude of father and sons, though founded upon a common idea of 'necessity', becomes increasingly different as time passes. What in Henry IV is predominantly tragic, a sense of profound weariness, is in his sons a practical sense of human limitations. Having played no part in the crime which had originally brought their father to the throne, the Prince and his brother are free from its consequences in tragedy and frustration, free therefore to achieve in the practical order all that he no longer hopes to attain. Yet the achievement itself is less satisfactory than it might have been earlier. The victory at Gaultree Forest is, morally speaking, a hollow victory, adequately summed up in the parsimonious ascription of it by Lancaster to supernatural collaboration —'God, and not we, hath *safely* fought to-day' (IV, iii). This confidence of a monopoly in the divine favour, soon to become so familiar in the mouth of Henry V, is thoroughly typical of the new political generation. It is also part of a certain inversion, characteristic of Shakespeare at this period, of the qualities normally ascribed to human nature at different stages in life. Age, instead of bringing insight and control, is associated with a peculiar feverish-

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ness and often with a remarkably distasteful kind of senile lechery; whilst youth, far from showing itself careless and impulsive, is calculating, frigid, and inhuman in its pursuit of success. This inversion accounts for the persistent sense of emptiness which dogs the efficient young politicians into whose hands the responsibility for the life of the state has fallen. The success of Henry's sons is accompanied, humanly speaking, by the progressive loss of what might be called a moral dimension, a loss—we are to understand—without which it could hardly have taken place, but which is not less characteristic of the spirit of this play than the petty and selfish futility of the rebel camp.

Even Falstaff, in his own way, is affected by the prevailing spirit. No longer is he felt, as in *Part I*, to be outside the action in which he participates, transcending and criticizing it by his own vitality. He has become subdued to the life around him. Death, disease, and the flesh now dominate his thoughts, so much so that the critics have detected the realistic, moral influence of Ben Jonson. No doubt that influence exists in the great prose scenes, but Shakespeare's emphasis is profoundly individual and perfectly in tone with the rest of the play. It represents, in fact, a deepening into tragedy of the Christian tones we have already detected in some of the most important passages of the previous play. The prevailing note is not grotesque or farcical, even in the serious meaning with which the word can be applied—following Mr. Eliot's hint—to some Elizabethan writing; it insists rather on tragic pathos, and on the corruption of human values by a combination of time and ill-living. The realism is of a kind that will be repeated and extended in later plays. The writer who conceived the sombre little episode of Doll Tearsheet's arrest by the beadles with the cruel clarity of Mistress Quickly's comment 'I pray God the fruit of her womb miscarry' (V, iv), was also the creator of the low scenes of Viennese life in *Measure for Measure*; in each case, and allowing for the difference in scale, the intention is perfectly moral and serious. For his appearance in this new world the Falstaff of *Part II* has been prepared by a modification of his character. His wit now relies for its effects upon a new and almost uniformly sombre range of ideas. Impecuniousness has become 'consumption of the purse', an 'incurable malady', whilst 'age' and 'covetousness' are seen as no less inextricably connected than 'young limbs' and 'lechery' (I, ii). This new Falstaff is entirely without illusions. Finding his companions among dotards like Shallow he strips them mercilessly of their pretensions, penetrating with ruthless clarity of vision to the reality beneath:

> 'Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. I do remember him (Shallow) at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring: when a'was naked, he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife; . . . a'was the very genius of famine, yet lecherous as a monkey, and the whores call'd him mandrake'. (III, ii).

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Falstaff's new vision, in other words, is the product of experience coloured by age. The repudiation of 'honour' in the preceding play is reinforced more and more by a tragic sense of what now appears as the normal human condition. The 'food for powder' whom he had formerly led into battle now speak through Feeble, who resigns himself to his enforced service in words that recall those once spoken by Falstaff himself at Shrewsbury: 'a man can die but once;—we owe God a death'. The words are similar but the attitude of Falstaff himself, confronted with them, has changed. Whereas at Shrewsbury, his reply to the Prince had been tinged with irony and wit, had implied an affirmation of the rights of life beyond all the selfish calculations of politicians, the Falstaff of *Part II* is content to allow Mouldy and Bullcalf to buy themselves free and to accept Feeble's resignation to his fate; for such, and no more, is the nature of things, and necessity justifies all: 'if the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason, *in the law of nature*, but I may snap at him. *Let time shape*, and there an end'. (III, ii).

Thus far, Falstaff's attitude is not very different from that of the other characters of the play. Age and helplessness are his recurrent themes, and his own behaviour, no longer fresh and personal, is subdued to the nature of surrounding reality. Yet from time to time a true note of tragedy (noticeably Christian in its associations) enters his utterances and makes him still the vehicle of the deepest feelings of the play. His most memorable remark in *Part II* is uttered in the great tavern scene, in the company of Doll Tearsheet, herself no longer as young as she has been, and is full of the new tragic sense: 'Peace, good Doll! do not speak like a death's-head; do not bid me remember mine end'. The remark connects Falstaff with the dark feeling of the political scenes, a connection made yet more explicit by Poins' comment in the same scene—'Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance?' These words, in their turn, should be read in relation to the similar phrase later put into the mouth of Troilus and testify to the continuity of Shakespeare's thought in the plays of this period: 'This is the monstruousity in love, lady, that the will is infinite and the execution confined, that the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit' (I). In the juxtaposition of these two phrases, taken from plays clearly conceived not so very far apart in time, we may find an illustration of the way in which individual and political issues illuminate one another in Shakespeare. Falstaff's words join the disease and concupiscence which are the outstanding features of the world as he now sees it to the malady and disharmony common to Northumberland and the King; political helplessness is seen related to personal frustration, and both proceed from a new and tragic reading of experience.

These considerations throw light on the famous *crux* of this play—the rejection of Falstaff by the newly-crowned King (V, v). Shakespeare not only accepted the artistic difficulty involved in this rejection, imposed on him by the nature of the material he

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inherited, but wove it into the conception of his play; it is a most revealing example of the subjugation of plot to the growing necessities of dramatic expression. For the cleavage between Falstaff and Prince Hal is only a projection of one fundamental to the play, one between unbridled impulse, which degenerates into swollen disease, and the cold spirit of successful self-control, which inevitably becomes inhuman. There is no doubt that the change in Shakespeare's conception of Falstaff in this play aims from the first at making the rejection at once feasible and significant. The Falstaff of *Part I* would never have allowed himself to be turned off without visible reaction, an aged, broken wreck of his former self. It is not accidental, therefore, that in *Part II* he is given an altogether new burden of lechery, age, and disease, a burden which undoubtedly justifies *in part* his treatment at the hands of Prince Hal. Here, as so often in Shakespeare, we must be careful not to simplify the issues. When King Henry, newly crowned, denounces his former companion as—

> So surfeit-swelled, so old and so profane,

he makes a true criticism which would not have seemed excessive to an Elizabethan audience, and which we must regard as following inevitably from the implications of his new position; and the criticism so made is backed with the austerity of a great religious tradition when he adds—

> Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace,

Yet there is also another side of the picture, to which we need equally to give its true weight. Though we must take the King's words at their own value, the same applies to Falstaff's repeated criticisms of the royal family, which are no less part of the truth: in much the same way we can accept Isabella's virtue in *Measure for Measure* without closing our eyes to the shortcomings which accompany it. This balancing of moral issues, in fact, is characteristic of Shakespeare, and especially so in the plays of this period. The contrasted characters—Falstaff and Prince Hal, Isabella and Angelo—occupy no more than a part of the whole field of reality; both are essentially complementary aspects of a poetic universe whose principle of unity lies not in the vision of any one of them, but in Shakespeare's interpretation of his material. Like Isabella's true judgments, though to a greater degree, those of Henry persistently suffer from being too easily made. The denial of past friendship involved in 'I know thee not, old man', the tight-lipped implication of disgust in 'leave gormandizing', the studied gesture to the gallery—'Presume not that I am the thing I was'; all these are as characteristic as the afterthought by which Falstaff, banished scarcely five minutes before, is arrested and thrown into prison by the returning ministers of the royal justice, to the accompaniment of Lancaster's suitably flat and unpleasing comment—

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> I like this fair proceeding of the King's:
> He hath intent his wonted followers
> Shall all be very well provided for.

This comment needs to be read in the light of Falstaff's death as announced in *Henry V*, before its full meaning becomes apparent. Even in this play, however, we are allowed a glimpse of Falstaff's considered judgment on Lancaster and, through him, on so much in this play. He describes him as 'a young, sober-blooded boy', one of those who 'when they marry get wenches'. The flexibility and richness of Falstaff's prose in a succession of phrases like 'apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes' only emphasizes by contrast the coldness, almost the perversion behind the successful princes and generals of this play. Prince Hal in *Henry IV—Part II* strikes a new note of calculating vulgarity which he regards as a necessary condition of his contact with the people and so as a contribution to the success which he has set himself, from the moment of his first soliloquy in *Part I*, as his goal. His remark to Poins—'My appetite was not princely got'—is highly typical; it implies a contrast between the normal sensual processes ('appetite', of course, in connection with the consuming desires of the blood, is a word which continually interested Shakespeare and other Elizabethans) and the indifference to humanity which is required of the 'princely' state. There is no need to be sentimental on behalf of either the Prince or Falstaff. The 'unpleasantness' in their relationship is a necessary part of the play. It springs, indeed, from all that is most individual in its conception; it translates into dramatic terms the 'disease' which we have found hanging over the English state, and it relates all the divisions between age and youth, between action and inaction, between folly and calculation to a developing split in Shakespeare's own conception of the world. The precise meaning, in terms of the poet's sensibility, of this bitter contrast between aged dissolution. and the controlled coldness so unnaturally attributed to youth, needs to be defined in relation to the Sonnets, to *Troilus and Cressida*, and to *Measure for Measure*. The Second Part of *Henry IV* provides, in a word, through the presentation of a society in which all the normal attributes are subject to a peculiar and most disquieting inversion, a fruitful approach to the issues more completely handled by Shakespeare in the first plays of his maturity.

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MUSIC CHRONICLE

ON the performance of music of the past—especially the more distant past—there are, broadly speaking, two schools of thought. According to one, the performers should endeavour to re-create the music in a manner which resembles as closely as possible an original performance. The authentic contemporary instruments should always be used, and the interpretation of the text should follow contemporary practice as precisely as is feasible. Ideally, the work should reach our ears in a form identical with that which was heard by the original audience, and if by twentieth-century standards that entails certain technical imperfections, these must be tolerated or even welcomed.

The other school of thought maintains that this ideal is fallacious. We cannot hope to experience music of the past exactly as contemporary audiences experienced it, for the obvious reason that we belong not to the period in question, but to the twentieth century. We cannot hear a Byrd mass of a Bach cantata in the same way as Byrd and Bach heard it, so is it logical to try to re-create as closely as possible the conditions of the original performance? Isn't it better to represent the music for a modern audience, on modern instruments, in terms with which a modern audience will be likely to be familiar?

Now this second case might be defensible if the re-creators were always men of genius. We can listen to Bach re-created in twentieth-century terms when Busoni is responsible for the modifications, because what Busoni has to say is intrinsically worth listening to. But Busonis are few and far between; and what normally happens when Bach is re-created by the competent academic musician is that he is re-created not in contemporary terms but in terms of the day before yesterday. The average level of contemporary musical taste is hardly twentieth-century at all, but belongs rather to the second half of the nineteenth century; and while a case can be made out for re-interpreting old music in twentieth-century terms, there can be no justification for interpreting it in terms of another period of the past which happens to be more familiar to us.

Clearly the ideal to be aimed at is some mean between the 'purist' school, which is sterile and moreover impractical, and the re-creative. If old music—and this includes all music which is not of the present day—is to mean anything significant to contemporary audiences, it must be conceived in terms which will go home to the twentieth century. But clearly it will not do this if no respect is shown for the conventions within which the artist originally worked. Much harpsichord music—to take a crude instance—cannot be adequately played on the piano because the piano is not an improved harpsichord but a different instrument. For the same reason baroque organ music can seldom be effectively played

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on a modern organ, and viol music is inevitably misrepresented by performance on modern strings. Yet *given a sensitive understanding* of the idioms of the composer and his period, it may be possible to adapt modern instruments to, as it were, a satisfying synonym for the original resources. Similarly, the music cannot be expected to live for any audience if the conventions of style, tempo, ornamentation, etc., appropriate to it are ignored. When once the style as the composer conceived it has been understood and assimilated, as far as it is possible for a twentieth-century mind to do so, there is still plenty of scope for initiative; to re-create without understanding is merely impudence.

The further one goes back in musical history the more difficult, of course, these problems of interpretation become. The Third Programme's fine historical survey of European music has, I think, erred in the early stages on the side of timidity. We know that much mediæval music, for instance, entailed an elaborate use of instruments, but we do not know—despite many speculations—precisely how the instruments were used. The Third's policy has been to leave out everything which we are not reasonably sure about, and while this is honest, it is not very exciting, and sometimes even misleading. I wonder whether some kind of imaginative re-creation might not have been worth risking. Even if it wasn't 'correct', I doubt whether it could have more damagingly misrepresented the music than some of these accurate, but pallid and incomplete performances have done. That such re-creations can be beautifully managed by a scholar who is also a fine creative artist is indicated by Dr. Egon Wellesz's recent arrangements of troubadour songs. In the B.B.C.'s series Max Meilli's singing of troubadour songs was sensitive and flexible, but in a sense too refined, paradoxical though this criticism may sound when applied to such hyper-sophisticated music. He sang not too passionately, but too subjectively, and with an excessive vibrato (as do almost all modern singers). Performances in the series which seemed to me to have caught exactly the right balance between scholarship and creativity were most of those by the Bodley Singers, introduced by Dom Anselm Hughes. It was a memorable event in one's listening experience to discover how thrilling such text-book museum pieces as organum and gymel can sound when understandingly performed. But the most wonderful musical experience I can recall during the last few months was not in the historical anthology at all. It was a performance, by a Belgian choir, of a complete Mass by Josquin des Prés. The singing of this heavenly music—I use the adjective advisedly—had tremendous passion, even ferocity, but it was beyond all petty personal joys or distresses. This is how the voices and the trumpets of angels ought to sound; we cannot hope, in our mortal experience at least, to come closer to the wrath and the peace of God.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music does not present such dangerous pitfalls to the performer as does mediæval music, for we have greater knowledge of it and more plentiful and accessible

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contemporary sources of information. On the other hand, whereas no-one without specialized knowledge would attempt (or alas would want) to perform mediæval music, almost any tyro can and does 'interpret' the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The current recorded issues of music of the period contain only one completely bogus re-creation, and nothing that is unsatisfactory in the same way as the recording of the Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* reviewed some while back. There seems to be a most praiseworthy tendency to encourage an authenticity of performance that is at the same time—and because of its authenticity—vitally alive.

Seventeenth-century music, perhaps significantly, fares less well than eighteenth. The recording of Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna* in Respighi's arrangement (H.M.V. sung by Gabriella Gatti with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vincenzo Belleza) is the one unequivocally execrable item among these recordings. It manages to transform Monteverdi's ardent and radiant music into something resembling the stalely febrile passion of the decadence of nineteenth-century Italian opera. This has the historical interest of revealing with remarkable clarity the continuity of the line from Monteverdi to Puccini, but it can be regarded only as a travesty of Monteverdi's work.

A late seventeenth-century violin work, Corelli's *La Folia*, is neither among its composer's most impressive achievements, nor among the most interesting contemporary variations on this very popular theme; it is for instance inferior to the fine set for gamba by Marin Marais. On a Decca recording it is played by Alfredo Campoli with a clean grace and precision which does everything possible to mitigate the vulgarity of Leonard's nineteenth-centuryish arrangement. Campoli also intelligently plays the variations without the violent changes of tempo which, in most performances of this piece, go far to destroy the continuity of the chaconne convention; (Corelli's own directions, adasio, vivace, etc., apply to mood rather than to speed). Nonetheless, despite Campoli's exquisite playing, these records cannot be more than tepidly recommended. The long cadenza is certainly not seventeenth-century, but it is not twentieth-century either; it belongs to the world of the romantic violin concerto. Apart from specific failings such as this, the records once more prove that baroque violin music cannot be convincing without harpsichord and string continuo. To play it with piano does not make it sound more 'modern'; on the contrary it makes it appear old-fashioned, like a not very successful harmony lesson in the nineteenth-century academic tradition. The music loses its depth and ripeness of sonority, and the intimacy of a chamber music combination. As a corollary to the above we might mention that if harpsichord music is to be played on the piano, a little H.M.V. record of Michelangeli playing two Scarlatti sonatas shows how to do it. The effect is different from Scarlatti's intentions, less witty and less exciting; but no-one could deny that it is very beautiful. But of course while the pianistic re-creation of solo harpsichord music brings

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difficulties of its own, they are not as insuperable as is the translation into pianistic terms of the harpsichord continuo.

For an example of a really superb recording of a classical baroque work, we may take Columbia's version of Marcello's oboe concerto—or rather concerto grosso for oboe and strings—in C minor, played by Leon Goosens with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Walter Susskind. This Marcello is the great Benedetto, composer of *Didone* and many fine religious works; and the records are among the loveliest that have come my way in a long time. The slow movement is an expressive, celestial aria, sinuously baroque in its line, classically pure in the balance of its formal architecture. The two quick movements have not Bach's contrapuntal density, but they have a nervous force that is at once strong and sensitive. To me, this music is more moving than all but the very finest moments in Handel; and here the performance is convincingly right, vitally alive, respectful of eighteenth-century convention without being slavishly archaic.

A large crop of Bach recordings manifest varying levels of authenticity and vigour. An orchestral arrangement of the *Sleepers Awake* chorale variations, played by the C.B.O. under George Weldon on Columbia, is the kind of thing that does not come off. The luscious sound of the nineteenth-century orchestra—in Bantock's scoring—cannot approximate to the translucent texture of Bach's organ registration. Moreover this performance suffers from a fault common to many nineteenth-cum-twentieth-century re-creations of the classical baroque; it is taken so slowly that the contours of the phrases are rendered flabby, and the structural relation of the periods is grievously weakened.

The organ of Westminster Cathedral is not an ideal instrument for the performance of Bach, but Fernando Germani is such a magnificent virtuoso on his instrument that his H.M.V. recording of the last and perhaps the greatest of Bach's organ preludes and fugues (the big B minor) should not be missed. Here the structure of the music is magnificently grasped. It is a pity that the recording is mechanically not as satisfactory as that of Germani's recent version of the Franck A minor Chorale.

On the whole, the Boyd Neel Orchestra's Decca recordings of the Brandenburg Concertos are admirable, lively in rhythm, clear in articulation and phrasing, and brilliantly reproduced. The only serious weakness is the substitution of the piano for the harpsichord continuo. As with the baroque violin sonatas, this is a case where modernization is fundamentally unsatisfactory, for the acoustical properties of the harpsichord allow it to blend with strings in a manner which cannot be emulated by the piano. It is to be hoped that Boyd Neel will use a harpsichord for the very important concertante keyboard part in No. 5, which is to be recorded shortly. This part is a superb piece of harpsichord writing and it cannot make its maximum effect on any other instrument. The fourth Brandenburg also appears in an H.M.V. version, played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky. This is a crisp

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and rhythmic performance, with some exceptionally elegant flute playing. This version also uses a piano continuo, very discreetly. Harpsichord continuo is employed in a refreshingly Bachian and accurate performance of *Sheep May Safely Graze*, sung by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, with two flutes, 'cello and harpsichord (Columbia).

But the most important of the new Bach issues is the H.M.V. version of the Matthew Passion, with a most distinguished gathering of German soloists, the choir of St. Thomas's Church and the Gewandhaus Orchestra, Leipzig, conducted by Gunther Ramin. This was made in Germany before the war, and technically is not up to the highest standard of modern recording. Nonetheless, made in Bach's own church, it conveys a feeling of devotional ardour which is wonderfully appropriate to the music. The choir is of reasonable dimensions, the orchestra plays vividly, with an effective and authentic use of recorders, the chorales are accompanied, and the singing of Karl Erb as the Evangelist and of Gerard Husch as Jesus is (paradoxically) both dramatic and liturgical. Clearly great care has been lavished on the performance. This being so, it is a pity that so many of the arias have had to be cut. Not only does one regret losing the music, but Bach's architectural scheme is seriously affected by the omission of these periodic points of repose, or contemplation of the universal significance of what is recounted in more particular and personal terms in the narrative sections.

I am inclined to think that the spirit and style of the Leipzig performance are on the whole more convincing than those of the new Decca version by English soloists under Reginald Jacques; and the Leipzig version profits from the use of the German language. The Decca version, however, contains some magnificent singing, especially from Kathleen Ferrier, and since it is incomplete it is too early as yet for any comparative judgment. One might perhaps object to the duplication of so large a work when materials are scarce, and there are no recordings of the more important Bach cantatas.

Another large-scale eighteenth-century work that comes from Decca is Gluck's *Orfeo*, in the Glyndebourne version. Here again there is some singing by Kathleen Ferrier of a quality such as one does not come across twice in a generation; and the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra under Fritz Stiedry plays with a lucid passion appropriate to Gluck's intensely dynamic music. The cutting of the work, however, is unintelligently managed, and the recording is unequal. One is grateful for these records because Gluck's music is not known as well as it ought to be (if it were better known perhaps less nonsense would be talked about the inexplicable and unpredictable nature of the genius of Berlioz); on the other hand one cannot but feel that records of such a relatively specialized interest deserved more care in the making.

Mozart does not involve so many problems of interpretation because the tradition of performing him is still alive—as we saw in the recent visit of the Vienna opera. A taste of their exquisitely

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civilized performance is given on an H.M.V. record of Maria Cebotari singing *Dove sono* from Figaro, with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Krips. This performance is in the genuine Mozartian manner—despite the singer's occasional distressing wobble. Krips achieves the same moving Mozartian elegance in a version of the *Incarnatus Est* from the C minor Mass, this time impeccably sung by Erna Berger. This, of course, is not the quintessential Mozart of the operas; though it adapts an operatic style to a liturgical use. It is exquisitely decorative, rather than profoundly expressive music; but it is stupid to complain that Mozart's church music does not sound like Bach's.

A still more rococo example of Mozart's early work is the Concerto for flute and harp, played on H.M.V. by Réné le Roy, Lili Laskine and the R.P.O. under Beecham. Dating from Mozart's Paris visit, this is a confectionary work in blues, pinks and golds, as seductive as a Boucher, but without the tragic undertone of Watteau. It is charmingly played, especially by the flute. The harp writing is rather perfunctory.

The most interesting of the Mozart recordings, however, are the Griller's version of the G major quartet K.387, and the Budapest's version of the Quintet in D, K.593 (Decca and Columbia respectively). Here the playing has a grace and vivacity that is almost too perfect. One wonders whether Mozart ever heard his works performed with quite this glittering precision; and whether perhaps, in the perfection, some quality of passion and zest is not sacrificed. But the Budapest players certainly achieve an apposite subdued intensity in the great slow movement of the quintet—a piece worthy to rank with the slow movement of the G minor quintet which, in its use of a sinister ostinato, it somewhat resembles; and one could hardly imagine the breath-taking fugato finale of the quartet being played more convincingly. The Griller Quartet also perform on Decca the Haydn work in C major from opus 33. Here the playing is neat and dexterous, but, in its desire to be 'civilized', too cold. The Hungarian Quartet, on the other hand, play the Haydn D major from opus 64 (*The Lark*) with just the right combination of urbanity with lyrical fervour. Their version of this lovely work should not be missed (H.M.V.).

Three Beethoven recordings may be mentioned for their brilliant virtuosity and their fidelity to the Beethovian temperament. The Sixth Symphony is given a performance of tremendous vitality and ripeness by Victor de Sabata with the Orchestra of the Augusteo, and the H.M.V. recording misses no subtlety of his interpretation. The brooding, dramatic quartet in C minor from opus 18, a fine example of the shock-tactics which the young Beethoven introduced into the sonata structure, is played with an ardent power by the Paganini Quartet, also on H.M.V.; while Claudio Arrau plays the E flat sonata from opus 31, with its especially characteristic opening, with his habitual magisterial eloquence (Columbia).

As an appendix to the above remarks on recordings of classical music, I would like to refer to four recently published books which

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bear on the performance of eighteenth-century music. There are three books on Mozart—St. Foix's little work on the *Symphonies of Mozart* (Dobson, 8/6), a re-issue of Professor Dent's *Mozart's Operas* (O.U.P., 16/-), and Professor Hutchings's *A Companion to Mozart's Piano Concertos* (O.U.P., 18/-). The St. Foix book is valuable in that it provides a thematic index to a considerable amount of Mozart's music which the average listener is ignorant of. The comments on the symphonies are helpful if considered alongside St. Foix's detailed discussion of the various phases of Mozart's work in his large book; though in itself this is not the kind of critical writing that gives, or is intended to give, any profound insight into Mozart's musical style. The translation, prone to a floweriness which may be tolerable in French but is embarrassing in English, does little to help. It is good news that the same publisher is to issue a translation of the big standard St. Foix work.

Professor Hutchings's book on the piano concertos is a fine example of systematic thinking in musical terms, particularly rewarding in its investigation of the relation between Mozart's operatic and concerto technique, an important theme which has never been adequately developed. Professor Dent's work is in the nature of a classic, and although it has no longer the importance it had on its first appearance, when Mozart's operas were little known, it is still easily the best work on the subject in English. It is a pity that it does not include more detailed discussion of Mozart's musical—as opposed to theatrical—technique in opera, for such hints as Professor Dent throws out are, as always, stimulating.

Adele Katz's book *Challenge to Musical Tradition* (Putman, 25/-) is a very important work based on the theories, almost unknown in this country, of Heinrich Schenker. Dr. Katz, following Schenker, attempts to define what unity of tonality in a classical composition means, and in so doing explodes the conventional notions of modulation and key relationship in favour of a theory which regards sonata structure as an extension—variously subtle in the hands of different schools and composers—of a basic I IV V I progression. (From this point of view sonata form is an elaboration of the fundamental structure of most Bach choral harmonizations). The implications of this theory are worked out by Dr. Katz in great detail through particular analysis, and while her book makes very hard reading it is amply rewarding, for it is one of the few books that really has something to say about the way musical structures work. It is the first serious attempt to grapple with the significance of classical tonality which I have come across.

While Dr. Katz's argument seems to me completely convincing so far as concerns the classical tradition, it is a pity that she applies the same criteria to music to which they aren't strictly relevant. Hindemith's theoretical work has proved conclusively that classical tonality is not in itself an absolute, but a convention. Dr. Katz cannot resist suggesting that the music of Debussy and Schoenberg (say) is 'inferior' because it is unsatisfactory from the

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standpoint of classical tonality; such a criticism is illegitimate because irrelevant. In the case of Wagner her argument is more justifiable, because his chromaticism has a direct relation to the decay of the classical convention. But in all her chapters Dr. Katz has paragraphs which are more illuminating than many large volumes of musical musings; and the chapters on C. P. E. Bach, Haydn and Beethoven are consistently brilliant.

Finally, I must mention a few miscellaneous recordings which seem to me to have an importance somewhat outside the usual run. A Columbia recording of Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements*, played by the Philharmonic Orchestra of New York conducted by the composer, is especially interesting, for this work seems to go far to reconcile the early Dionysiac manner of *Le Sacre* with Stravinsky's more recent Apollonian classicism. This fusion suggests a possible line of development for Stravinsky's future work; for however much one may admire the clean transparent texture of the music Stravinsky has written in America one can hardly deny that this clarity seemed to be achieved at the expense of the native vitality and energy that had characterized his music from *Petrouchka* to *Les Noces*. It is useless to blame Stravinsky for the rootless cosmopolitanism of his later work, since this quality was the inevitable consequence of his facing up to the circumstances in which he found himself. Nonetheless, it is encouraging that in this new work Stravinsky demonstrates that his cosmopolitan 'purity' need not altogether lose touch with his ancestry. The symphony may be a key work in his development, like *Petrouchka*; it is no doubt merely an accident that both works contain an important obbligato part for piano. I do not know that this is great music, but it has a kind of wry nobility, and is uncompromisingly honest.

The Strauss Oboe Concerto, although also written in the middle nineteen-forties, is poles apart from the Stravinsky. It is an evocation of a vanished world, warm, genial, ripe, and—in the bleakness of the contemporary scene—somehow unreal. It does not pretend, of course, to be more than entertainment music; but it is an entertainment that no longer has any valid relation to a society; 'so round and round the ghosts of beauty glide And haunt the places where their honour died'. The ghost of Mozart is prostituted here, but the writing has such expertise and such a rascally seductiveness that we cannot but revel in the music while it lasts. Leon Goosens weaves the hyper-sophisticated arabesques of the solo line with his customary grace, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Galliera, negotiates the gaily complex texture with reasonable competence (Columbia).

Ravel's A minor Trio is certainly his greatest chamber work, with a formidable power and passion in addition to the typical Ravel glamour; it is given a performance on H.M.V. records by the Trio de Trieste which reveals its majestic stature. The same composer's Don Quixote songs, more representative of the elegant, exotic side of his talent, are beautifully performed by Bernac and Poulenc, also on H.M.V. The slow liturgical song is especially

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sensitive and impressive. With these we may place two of the subtlest of Fauré's songs, *Le Secret* and *Clair de lune*, sung by an artist who rivals Bernac in her understanding of the French *mélodie*—Maggie Teyte (H.M.V.).

From Columbia come two late romantic piano works, *Les Requiebros*, the first of Granados's *Goyescas*, most seductive if over-fat music superbly written for the instrument and played with exceptional clarity by Iris Loveridge; and Szymanowski's Theme and Variations in B flat minor, a very early work which shows him as the successor to Chopin, with an infusion of Reger and a more sensitive Rachmaninov. The music has a genuine, if simple, heroic quality and is sympathetically played by Malcuzynski. Both works are extremely well recorded.

So are two Elgar works, the *Introduction and Allegro* and the *Enigma Variations*, both played by the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli. The performances are splendid, passionate without excess (H.M.V.). Lastly, Margaret Ritchie sings Schubert's *Shepherd on the Rock* with Reginald Kell playing the clarinet; a to my mind not very distinguished piece adequately sung: and there is a delightful H.M.V. record of madrigals by Wilbye, Weelkes, Benet and Munday, sung by schoolboys aged 12 to 18 with a freshness and cleanliness of intonation which is hard to come by in professional choral societies. Surely—technical imperfections and all—we have here the spirit of the original performances of this music. And this is another case in which the 'spirit of the original' brings too the vitally twentieth-century performance.

W.H.M.

CORRESPONDENCE

MR. BOTTRALL AND MR. ELIOT

Sirs,

I notice that in his letter[1] of June 19th, 1947, refuting Mr. Mason, Mr. Bottrall writes 'I ought perhaps also to say that "Distance has Magic" was drafted in the Autumn of 1939 and finished in the Spring of 1941, when I had read only "Burnt Norton" of the Four Quartets'.

On the other hand, in the prefatory note to the volume *Farewell and Welcome*, published in 1945 Mr. Bottrall says 'These poems, except for the dated 'Prologue', were written between June 1942 and November 1943'.

It seems possible therefore, that Mr. Eliot's reference[2] to 'Freedom Lies in *Adaptation*' (the title in the published version is 'Freedom Lies in Acceptance') may have more relevance than is realized.

Yours etc.,

CAIRO. M. B. DAVIES.

[1]Published in *Scrutiny* for September.—Ed.
[2]See his letter in *Scrutiny* for December.—Ed.

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HENRY IV.—PART I.

A number of letters have been received pointing out that Mr. Traversi applies to Douglas a phrase (II, 4, 100) that is actually about Hotspur, and that there could be no reference in Shakespeare's play to Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a play not then written. Mr. Traversi, rather inaccessibly abroad, did not receive his proofs, and there had not been time, before this issue went to press, to get the correspondence to him. The Editors hope that the correspondents will accept this general acknowledgment and thanks.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

'CRITIQUE': THE FIRST TWO YEARS

Most of the post-war literary periodicals in France correspond in organization and intention to the ideal sketched by M. Fluchère in this journal (Vol. II, No. 3): 'Hence, when French reviews have fairly got out of their teens, their usual organization into an anthological and a critical part. In the former, there is ample room allotted for new productions, ranging from poetry to fiction (not short stories alone, but novels also, given in several instalments, which is a proof of the fidelity and interest expected even from the casual reader) and essay-writing; the latter is reversed for reviews and notes upon the manifold activities of contemporary artistic life'. The correspondence admits of considerable variations. A typical number of *Les Temps Modernes*, for instance, contains in the main part an instalment of a long philosophical essay by J.-P. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty or Simone de Beauvoir, a generous section of a novel, a poem, and the rest of the number is grouped under the headings, 'Documents', 'Témoignages', 'Exposés' and a miscellaneous coda of book reviews. Two-thirds of a 1945 number of *Fontaine* are taken up with literature and belles lettres, followed by a section 'Chroniques' containing long serious reviews of philosophy, music and the theatre. Shorter reviews follow under 'Notes de lecture'. An interesting feature is a survey of contemporary literary reviews, a glance at which will serve to indicate the sort of thing offered by *Fontaine's* chief contemporaries. From this survey it appears that French reviews try to bring at least one article bearing on the literature of the past, or failing that, something *inédit*. This number of *Fontaine*, for instance, printed 'six lettres inédites de Mérimée à Stendhal'. *Poésie 45* was bringing out at the same time 'onze lettres inédites de Flaubert'. A number of subjects seem to turn up in all the

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reviews, in particular the 'Existential' philosophers. Certain writers seem to contribute fairly regularly to several reviews. There appears to be a general interest in American, English, German and Italian literature, an interest that could profitably be nourished by more prolonged study. At least, to confine oneself to the representation of English letters, it would be interesting to learn to what Stephen Spender and the author of *Brighton Rock* owe the prominence they enjoy in the pages of contemporary French reviews.

Critique differs from these periodicals in confining itself strictly to reviews of books. It offers each month from seven to ten articles of between four to five thousand words and a section of short reviews. This corresponds roughly to offering the equivalent of the two leading reviews in each of four weekly numbers of the *Times Literary Supplement*. The articles are signed, the signatures are usually those of 'experts' on the subject with which the book under review purports to deal. These subjects are those normally thought of as coming within the purview of the educated public. The French review, however, does not review biographies at length. It is only exceptionally that a book is made an excuse for an unconnected study. In the preface to the first number it is stated that 'Ces études dépassent l'importance de simples comptes-rendus. A travers elles, *Critique* voudrait donmer un aperçu, le moins incomplet qu'il se pourra, des diverses activités de l'esprit humain dans les domaines de la création littéraire, des recherches philosophiques, des connaissances historiques, scientifiques, politiques et économiques'. A further point of resemblance to the *T.L.S.* is the absence of collective responsibility. 'Les auteurs des articles développent librement une opinion qui n'engage qu'eux-mêmes'. A certain degree of coherence and continuity is, however, obtained by distributing the books covering one subject to a single reviewer. Thus, during these two years, all the books on physics are reviewed by Georges Ambrosino. On the other hand, when several reviewers divide up the work, they do not refer to any conflict of opinion that may have arisen where their paths cross, indeed, they write as if they had not read their predecessors' articles. No attempt is made to keep up with the monthly flow of books. No space is wasted in 'placing' works of ephemeral interest. The choice of books to be reviewed seems to be made on strict principles: that each book must make an important contribution to some field of study and if possible be the best book in any language on the subject. More attention is given to philosophical than to historical studies. Economics and sociology get as much attention as French literature. A great deal of space is allotted to the discussion of 'current affairs', in particular of German problems.

Critique thus presupposes the existence of a public with a university training and a wide horizon, with sufficient background of knowledge and intellectual curiosity to both want and be able to keep abreast of the latest developments in philosophy, economics, sociology, etc., and at the same time interested in the current manifestations of the artistic world and in the pressing political

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issues. The reviews are written in such a way that an educated man not a specialist can follow them. The continued existence of *Critique* seems to justify the confidence of one reviewer who writes: 'Quoi qu'on en dise, il est de bonnes raisons d'être optimiste en France pour l'avenir de ce qu'on nomme, d'un terms vague mais universellement entendu, l'esprit'.

It would be folly to attempt the definition the French writer evades. It is, however, possible to describe some of the characteristics of French intellectual manners by noting the way the *Critique* reviewers approach their task. The learned writers do not seek to shine at the expense of the books they are reviewing. The best of them invariably present the 'theses' of the book clearly and succinctly in such a way that the reader can carry away from his reading a number of 'ideas'. For instance, to take an example likely to be familiar to the English reader, the reviewer of Margaret Mead's *From the South Seas* condenses the results of her field work in different communities, indicates the reasonable conclusions and draws attention to their bearing on the work of the psychologist. The reviewer, that is, brings into the forum of general discussion as much as can be safely abstracted and omits all criticism of the 'technique' used and comparison or contrast with other anthropological studies bearing on the theme. The treatment of modern physics is on similar lines. Georges Ambrosino tries to expound the latest theories about atomic structure, fission, etc., indicates the probable direction future research is likely to take, thus giving the reader as much as can be grasped by verbal description. The English reader will not find anything new in the following quotation. It is given to show the sense of responsibility in a particular field where irresponsibility has been the rule. The same spirit could be illustrated in any other branch of knowledge. At the end of a review of a book on cosmic rays M. Ambrosino writes, 'Ainsi les concepts, comme celui de la masse, qui, à la suite d'une longue habitude, nous apparaissent les plus clairs et les plus simples, dans le domaine infiniment petit sont remplacés par des notions beaucoup moins immédiatement accessibles. La tâche de la physique se limite à définir ces notions, à établir les règles opératoires auxquelles elles obéissent, à livrer à la pensée des instruments d'un maniement sûr. Elle ne saurait rien affirmer sur la réalité profonde des choses. On voit par là combien serait pauvre une conception que voudrait réduire la pensée, ou même le seul domaine de la connaissance à la science exacte. Il n'est pas douteux qu'aucun être ne saurait vivre à l'aide de cet unique outil, d'une grande perfection, certes, mais qui n'est qu'un outil. Si l'on désire avoir un sentiment aigu de cette vérité, on lira avec profit le chapitre que M. Leprince-Ringuet consacre à la vie du chercheur de laboratoire. On éprouvera certainement l'insuffisance de ce plan d'activité, malgré les dénégations rituelles de l'auteur. Mais n'achève-t-il pas lui-même son livre par une invocation religieuse d'allure saint-sulpicienne? Rien n'éclaire mieux l'ambiguité que présente assez souvent l'âme du savant. Scientifique d'abord, il assume une attitude positiviste,

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puis, sentant le port-à-faux de cette position, il retombe dans l'ornière des religions historiques'.

In another article he raises a question that might well have been dealt with at greater length. 'Les livres de vulgarisation répondent-ils à un besoin? Doivent-ils faire partie des ouvrages que lit l'homme cultivé? Peu importent en définitive les résultats de la science. Grâce à elle, un contact avec la nature, avec l'objet, s'établit qui est proprement irremplaçable. Grâce à elle, le sacré se réfugie dans la réalité même. L'audace de l'esprit scientifique, l'amour qu'il contient ont une importance plus grande que les théories et leur langage impressionnant. La tâche des vulgarisateurs est capitale et c'est pourquoi on leur demandera des ouvrages clairs, ordonnés et exempts de toute poésie de pacotille'. These three demands constitute almost all the criticism found in the reviews of scientific works. In making these demands, the reviewers are in the best French university tradition.

The demand for elegance in the presentation of ideas is often thought to go with indifference to their possible want of profundity. The reviewers in *Critique* are far from being thus indifferent. A very good example may be seen in a review of Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution*. This example will also serve to illustrate a further point. *Critique* is remarkable for exhibiting detachment and coolness even when the subjects to be treated are those about which people are apt to take sides and abandon all pretence to judicial poise. The reviewer begins by enquiring into the reasons for the great success of Burnham's book in the U.S.A. 'On peut l'expliquer d'abord par la simplicité et la clarté avec lesquelles l'auteur expose sa théorie: on est si facilement entraîné par cette limpidité apparente qu'il faut un effort de réflexion pour s'apercevoir qu'elle ne dévoile dans l'ensemble rien de bien profond et que les affirmations faites sont plutôt rendues plausibles que prouvées'.

This detachment is equally remarkable in polemic, in fact the expression of disagreement in *Critique* is free from rancorous overtones and comes near to fulfilling the ideal conditions expressly formulated in one of the 'polemical' articles. 'Le cas se présente autrement, si l'on ne lutte pas, si l'on discuite, si l'on ne se contente pas d'affirmer que l'on est contre quelqu'un ou quelque chose, si l'on prétend démontrer que l'autre a tort. Alors il faut y aller prudemment, faire sien le point de vue de l'adversaire pour l'attaquer du bon côté, réfuter ce que l'autre dit et non ce que vous voudriez lui faire dire; il faut savoir en plus ce qu'est une discussion, ne pas prouver trop, pour ne pas miner sa propre position ou rendre toute discussion impossible'.

Critique also belies another conventional view of French intellectual habits, namely, the tendency to abstraction and systematisation at the expense of the jungle-like multiplicity of real life. I came upon this, for example, with an Anglo-Saxon smile. 'Une double opposition domine l'histoire allemande; celle entre Ouest et Est, celle entre Nord et Sud. Le Sud civilise le Nord pour être organisé par celui-ci dans la suite; l'Ouest, d'esprit occidental,

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cherche la stabilité, l'Est, pays de colonisation, pousse aux aventures. Le problème est donc l'unification. Il a été résolu en trois étapes: unification littéraire et linguistique depuis Luther jusqu'à la fin de l'époque classique; unification économique du XIXe siècle; unification politique par l'hitlérisme. Mais cette unification n'est pas réussie. Dans chaque Allemand, deux Allemagnes existent l'une à côté de l'autre. Une vie intérieure qui n'a pas prise sur la réalité politique a pour contre-coup l'abandon devant une organisation anonyme et inhumaine. Un réalisme outrancier dans le détail rend possible des élans irraisonnés et déraisonnables. Parce qu'il est mou, l'Allemand invente des attitudes de héros et déchaîne des forces dont il ne sait pas se rendre maître . . . etc. . . '. But a few pages later we find the reviewer, Eric Weil, one of the most capable regular contributors, regretting the absence in the book of 'l'analyse des facteurs économiques et de géographie physique' and listing a number of stubborn facts which interrupt the sweep of the generalizations. This reviewer also corrects several mistakes in the rendering of crucial German terms.

I can't pretend to say how rare a thorough knowledge of foreign languages is among the writers in French periodicals. *Critique* is one of the few French reviews which employ experts to handle works by foreign authors. (And this is far in advance of the printers who never seem able to spell a German or an English word twice correctly on the same page). Consequently it is one of the most open-minded and least parochial of French periodicals. Edmund Wilson in his disappointing *Europe without Baedeker* reports Santayana on the French as follows: 'He liked France very much in some ways, and, if the French had not been so narrow, he might perhaps have lived in France. But they were occupied with their own interests to a degree that made real intercourse with them difficult—everything else was only politeness'. The pages of *Critique* afford abundant refutation of this view, not only in the field of science and economics, but in that of philosophy, even when of a kind quite unfamiliar. A striking example is the review of Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature* which the reviewer says 'appartient à un genre que la France ne possède pas. C'est un excellent ouvrage de culture'.

French writers, broadly speaking, have greater difficulties in approaching foreign literature than foreign 'thought' and in this field have tended to fall back on their own resources and literary categories. (I once read a French study of T. S. Eliot which was based exclusively on French sources and did not contain a single reference to an English or American critic). Although *Critique* is distinctly weak in its handling of this department, it is admirably aware of the difficulties. Thus, when two highly unsatisfactory French books appeared purporting to deal with Modern American Literature, *Critique's* reviewer contrasted them with the best American book available to him. And if Alfred Kazin's *On Native Grounds* had been a better book, the reviewer would no doubt have been able to find his bearings. At least his awareness of the

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difficulties is beyond question. 'En vérité, la tâche est peu facile, car le recul nous fait défaut, et l'éclectisme du public français, son admiration docile ou aveugle, peuvent mal s'amender au milieu des contradictions de nos "critiques autorisés". L'homme des U.S.A. accroît cette confusion, quand parfois il s'étonne, à Paris, du vif succès de certains de ses compatriotes et, fort obligeamment, en propose d'autres assez insignifiants, à notre admiration'. (The situation sketched in this quotation is general: all the countries of the so-called Atlantic civilization are busily translating each other's works and to judge by the bookshops of, say, Milan, Zurich, Paris, London (and for all I know, New York) and the new magazines springing up in Germany, these international exchanges tend to ignore the significant contributions each country has to make and to propagate inflated values. As instances, I might take the reception of Wiechert[1] and Jünger in France, England and the U.S.A. and an 'England' number of a French periodical in which neither Powys nor Myers were represented or even mentioned). At the end of his long review G.-A. Astre concludes, 'Il est dangereux, semble-t-il, d'apprécier tout cela au nom d'une esthétique purement "française"; comme il serait imprudent, peut-être, de ne voir dans ces romans que les diverses étapes d'une prise de conscience purement américaine (encore que ce soit *d'abord* cela . . .) "J'apprécie cette littérature, mais comme un phénomène extérieur à notre vie", répondait à une récente enquête M. Jacques Lemarchand. Le monde est-il donc encore divisibles en compartiments étanches?'

This last sentence (expecting the answer 'no') might be taken as the basic conviction of the contributors to *Critique*. For although there is no attempt at a synthesis in these pages, it is evident that for the reviewers the subjects or departments of knowledge are not without communications, at least in the sense that reviewer and reader are supposed to be capable of appreciating and assimilating the ideas extracted from all the departments. This may be seen, for example, in the tasks allotted to some of the regular contributors. The *Directeur* of *Critique*, Georges Bataille, writes articles on French, American and English literature, philosophy, sociology, current affairs and biology. I include the last-named science on the strength of a remarkably capable article on a book entitled *Les Changements de Sexe*. M. Bataille not only summarises a mass of scientific evidence, but brings out clearly certain ideas of general significance which seem to emerge from the present stage of the scientific investigations. One of these is that 'le sexe n'est qu'un caractère analogue à l'état solide ou liquide d'un corps'.

Careful reading through the first nineteen numbers of this review yields nothing on the philosophic and scientific side that contradicts the optimistic pronouncement of the first quotation I made from *Critique*. The review seems totally preoccupied with setting in motion a vigorous current of ideas and exhibits remarkable

[1]Interesting confirmation of this point will be found in a letter printed in the *Times Literary Supplement* of February 14th, 1948.

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powers of intellectual assimilation. The writers, by their absence of criticism, seem to concur in believing themselves the heirs of a system of education that is essentially sound. Incidental remarks, it is true, leave us in no doubt that the contributors are aware of the occasional lapses to which academic minds are liable, but the general impression is that intellectual life in France is healthy, sound and capable of self-direction in a difficult age. It is therefore surprising to find the author of the optimistic quotation, Eric Weil, (who continues, 'Si l'on ne sait pas toujours très clairement ce que l'on veut, l'on sent du moins que la continuation pure et simple est devenue impossible, que ce n'est pas un jeu amusant de poser des problèmes, mais que les problèmes se posent bon gré mal gré, que les chemins d'une fuite coupés, il faut se décider. Ce sont les traits caractéristiques des époques où l'on ne parle pas beaucoup de l'inquiétude parce qu'on est inquiet, des époques où il est difficile le s'entendre, mais qui peuvent mener a de grands résultats') revealing in a later article that France is in urgent need of a collective study of its educational system. The occasion for his remarks is a report of a Harvard committee appointed in 1943 to examine the problem of general education in a free society. From the summary given by Eric Weil it would seem that the book deserves examination in these pages, although the recommendations of the Harvard committee might fall short of what is regarded as essential by *Scrutiny*. For M. Weil the report came as a revelation. 'Un chef-d'oeuvre. Chef-d'oeuvre de clarté, de sens des réalités, de pénétration dans les idées, chef-d'oeuvre de style aussi, l'un de ces livres qu'il faudrait discuter à fond, quitte à y passer, s'il le faut, plus de temps qu'il n'en fallut pour l'écrire. Ou devant lesquels on s'écrie: Prenez et lisez!'

* * *

It would be agreeable to be able to report that *Critique* was as distinguished for literary criticism as for its handling of scientific and philosophic ideas. But of literary criticism as practised in *Scrutiny* there is not a trace. It may therefore be of interest to describe the application of intelligence to novels and poems in the pages of *Critique*, since in this respect *Critique* does not differ essentially from other French periodicals. The dissatisfaction the English reader often feels when turning to these reviews for enlightenment is partly due to the fact that French critics do not feel obliged to justify their value judgments, and close attention to the text is rarely met with. This is not to say that the texts are not closely examined nor that value judgments are not made. But they are, as it were, preliminary tasks, privately undertaken, before the business of reviewing begins.

More than this, a glaring failure in sensibility does not appear to disqualify a reviewer. It may be unfair to choose for illustration an article on an English writer. I do so only because the material will be familiar. The article I have in mind is devoted to Aldous Huxley of whom the review writes, 'Aucun autre écrivain étranger

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n'a été aussi copieusement traduit depuis la libération'. This reviewer treats Huxley as a thinker—'on sent en lui une extraordinaire avidité intellectuelle'—and writes without irony of 'l'esprit d'observation et la curiosité encyclopédique qui lui étaient naturels'. He regards the novels as well as the essays as so many stages in an intellectual progress towards *The Perennial Philosophy* which 'marque aujourd'hui pour nous le point le plus avancé de sa pensée'. The reviewer mentions 'son premier grand roman *Contrepoint*'. I was equally shocked by another reviewer who, dealing with Simone de Beauvoir wrote incidentally 'cette nature très généreuse a déjà écrit un chef-d'oeuvre', meaning the novel, *L'Invitée*.

The point of view I am taking for granted as being proper to the literary critic is surprisingly represented by an isolated paragraph in *Critique*:

> 'Si l'on part en effet d'un tel postulat, il ne se peut guère que bientôt, et malgré soi, on ne soit tout doucement amené à faire de Melville une sorte de philosophe et de son oeuvre une illustration. Le danger est ici de réduire Melville à ses idées, ou à celles qu'on présume être siennes . . . '

Yet this is just what most of the reviewers seem to be doing. For Albert Béguin looking back on Valéry's career 'les poèmes de *Charmes* et de *La Jeune Parque* ne sont guère que des images au bord de la route'. 'Pour s'émerveiller de ses réussites ou s'intéresser à ses échecs, il faut référer ces oeuvres aux conflits, aux problèmes et aux jeux désespérés dont l'esprit de Valéry était le théâtre'. And M. Béguin proceeds to lay bare the metaphysical dilemma. 'Nullité de la vie, rebelle à tout clarté; inefficience de l'esprit devant la richesse de la vie. Dans cette impasse s'achève la vieillesse désespérée de Valéry, en un moment de pathétique nostalgie d'une vie trop méprisée au nom de la pure intelligence, jamais vécue, perdue'. There we have Valéry *épinglé*, sprawling on a pin.

The literary reviewers, some of whom are themselves 'writers', possess an added grace of style not found in the articles on scientific subjects. This extra something can often be appreciated in isolation by slightly relaxing the attention and listening to the sound of the words which then have an effect just short of the rhetorical. The following is perhaps too relaxed an example to be fairly representative. It is the conclusion of a review (a good place to look for these flourishes) of Eluard's *Poésie ininterrompue*.

> 'Le livre, à loin près le plus beau qu'ait donné Eluard; et souvent aussi le moins "éluardien". Si le surréalisme doit encore être autre chose qu'une resucée des châteaux à fantômes et autre chose aussi qu'un des refuges du pharasaïsme moderne, nul doute qu'il ne finisse par s'avouer qu'avec Eluard . . . une espèce de fraternité demeure encore, non seulement possible, mais effective . . . outre des fragments dont le ton dépouillé fait diablement frais sur nos muqueuses, on trouve encore ici certains "zèbres

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pas mal'' dont la brutalité (Dieu! Eluard brutal!) ne se laissera pas oublier de si tôt.

'Nous les emporterons, ces zèbres, dans nos îles; quand par ici l'oxygène se sera fait trop rare'.

No account of the literary scene as it appears through the articles in *Critique* would be complete without mention of the survival of interest in *surréalisme*. Georges Bataille writes in No. 2: 'qui nierait aujourd'hui le pouvoir rayonnant du surréalisme? Non qu'il y ait là rien d'incontestable, non que l'on n'aperçoive aussitôt la suite des erreurs et des quiproquos. Mais les tares du surréalisme, qu'elles touches les oeuvres ou les hommes, en manifeste plutôt la force. Le surréalisme est ce qui *malgré* l'ensemble—en somme décevant—des oeuvres et des hommes vit et s'impose authentiquement'. That is, the interest is quite outside literature and art. 'Il est vrai qu'il faut aussi définir le surréalisme comme une école artistique et littéraire . . . il est comme tel fondé sur l'*écriture automatique*. Il donne une valeur décisive à cette sorte de pensée, l'analogue du rêve, qui ne se soumet pas au contrôle de la raison: c'est ainsi qu'il dérobe l'esprit de l'homme à toute autre fin que poétique. Aucune chance à partir de là qu'un poème, un tableau, un film ait du point de vue commun le moindre sens. Mais ce qui est digne d'attention est moins le résultat que le principe. L'oeuvre surréaliste choque mais il n'importe guère au fond d'irriter les faibles: ce n'est qu'une conséquence inévitable, *au surplus* désirable et gaie. La sommation morale qui fonde l'activité n'a rien à voir avec ce pauvre résultat. Elle est d'une autre nature'.

M. Georges Bataille from whom the above quotation was taken approaches closer to actual poems than these remarks would suggest. Another of his articles on a book also reviewed in *Scrutiny* will serve as well as another to situate *Critique* in the context of argument which has led to this investigation.

One of the most interesting books published in 1947 was *La Peste*, by Albert Camus. M. Bataille was disappointed by the book which he describes as 'le plus terne des livres de Camus'. He does not pursue the point by examining the style, but by searching for the author's *intention morale*. For M. Bataille the novel turns on a speech made by Tarrou (summarised in *Scrutiny*, Vol. xiv., No. 4) for 'Tarrou exprime des idées de l'auteur'. Judging by the novel alone, I should have said that the final word lay in the contrast between Tarrou and the others who dispute the title of protagonist. M. Camus, however, has published two articles in *Combat* under the title *Ni victimes, ni bourreaux* which express, of course, indisputably, his ideas and these ideas are apparently those put into the mouth of Tarrou. But M. Bataille does not slip from the novel to the newspaper articles altogether. He seizes on a weakness of *La Peste*—the unrelated introduction of *sainteté*—'sous le signe duquel il a finalement placé son livre'. (This is only true if we regard the objections of Dr. Rieux as not worth taking into account). He declares that M. Camus has fallen into confusion and slid away from his original 'intention morale'. The backsliding is into every-

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day morality: 'la morale prêchée dans ces pages sévères, sobres, souvent denses, nous la connaissons: c'est la morale de tous les temps, c'est, avare et sans vie, une morale du malheur'. According to M. Bataille, M. Camus did not intend to come to such a disgraceful conclusion. His original conception of morality was much finer. To demonstrate this, M. Bataille turns to two early plays (which deserve mention in any account of M. Camus and will shortly be available in translation) *Le Malentendu* and *Caligula*. The latter, M. Bataille admits, is an artistic failure, but claims that just because of that it is 'la plus riche de sens' because the author is trying to prove something and so clearly reveals his 'intention morale'. (Here is a crux: does anything that can fairly be so described exist consciously in the author's mind before putting pen to paper?) M. Bataille shows that he is aware of the element of mere play in this early work (composed in 1939?) but cuts the knot by claiming that some of the ideas thrown up playfully by M. Camus are actually true. At this point M. Bataille appears to be making an original contribution concerning the *sacré*, but he finds quotations from the play, particularly in the opposition between Caligula and the representative of good sense, Cherea, to justify the following account:

> 'Le souci du possible ordonne en nous le primat de l'avenir sur le présent: le présent est le luxe, il est inutile . . . c'est le déchaînement de ce que le souci de l'avenir enchaîne, c'est la démesure, l'impossible, la passion; si nous admettons le primat du temps présent, un instant nous avons le pouvoir de Caligula, qui lui-même ne dispose entièrement de ce pouvoir qu'à la condition de tuer le souci de l'avenir en lui. Cette opposition de Caligula et de Cherea, de la passion et de la raison, de l'impossible et du possible, du primat dilapidateur du présent et du primat parcimonieux de l'avenir, est de même nature que celle du sacré et du profane'. Or, in simpler language, 'il n'y a pas de vie possible sans passion, mais par la passion toute vie serait impossible, si le possible, à l'avance, ne s'en était pas décidément *séparé*'.

From this exposition M. Bataille passes to an article M. Camus published in 1945 containing the first part of an essay in which 'Camus fonde la morale sur la révolte'. M. Bataille interprets this article as follows: 'la valeur affirmée par la révolte est toujours insoumission, passion insoumise, déchaînée'. After a closely reasoned discussion M. Bataille seems to approve of this position, but claims that it is extremely difficult to maintain, and in fact *La Peste* represents a relapse.

In an attempt to illustrate the *sort of thing* one is liable to find when one turns up an article in a French review on a contemporary verse or prose writer I have mutilated that article and neglected aspects which should not be ignored. I have presented the argument as if its main purpose were to elucidate a critical verdict on *La Peste*. The article could with even greater justice

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be described as a stage in the development of M. Bataille's own thought about *la morale*. And in presenting it in this light the emphasis would have to fall on the parallel with Sade I have not yet mentioned. M. Bataille himself announces the purpose of his article as follows: 'J'essayerai de montrer que . . . la démarche initiale de sa pensée le (Camus) situe à côté de Sade, qu'on ne voit la portée de son attitude morale qu'à la rapprocher de celle de Sade'. Both Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot contribute articles to *Critique* on Sade. M. Bataille has pursued similar enquiries into 'le primat de l'instant' in a number of articles in his review.

This preoccupation (which seems to bear so strange a relation to D. H. Lawrence's gift for living in the present) is no doubt linked with the belief in the importance of the surrealist faith and the passionate (but controlled) discussion of existentialism (which is not the same thing as acceptance) of which we find so much in the pages of *Critique*. But whether one preoccupation or several, it presents to the English reader a serious obstacle to immediate understanding. M. Bataille has himself noted the difficulty. He takes as an example the translation of Guido da Ruggieri's book on Existentialism, edited and introduced by Rainer Heppenstall. 'La préface de Rainer Heppenstall marque bien à quel point l'"aventure existentialiste", j'entends le soudain développement de l'école française et le tapage autour de lui, est inintelligible du dehors. Son auteur, qui écrivait en novembre 1945, tire principalement son information d'un article de Mme. Claude-Edmonde Magny. Je regrette pour ma part d'y être personnellement mis au nombre des existentialistes français. A mon sens, toute l'affaire est malheureuse, une confusion généralisée, entretenue par une excitation journalistique. D'ailleurs Rainer Heppenstall semble s'en douter, sa préface n'est pas rassurante. Elle dit à peu près: "Kierkegaard, bien sûr (on l'a connu en Angleterre encore plus tard qu'en France). Ensuite arrive celui-ci et celui-là, mais nous voyons mal le sens . . . ". Ce que Mme. Magny dit des livres de Sartre, de Camus, de Blanchot ou des miens (un seul existentialiste sur quatre) lui semble assez navrant: ce n'est pas ce qu'il attendait de la France après le silence de l'occupation. Et il cite volontiers un jugement de Benedetto Croce disant de la philosophie de l'existence qu'elle "encombre le monde de l'esprit", qu'elle est "surexcitée, empoisonnée, perverse, une sorte d'enflure de l'aine.

* * *

I shall be satisfied if this report on the first two years of *Critique's* activity serves to arouse interest in a remarkable review —remarkable in the sense that it really fulfils the claim made in the preface to the first number. At the same time I trust I have to some extent substantiated the remarks made on various occasions in this journal concerning the difficulty of finding common ground between English and French critical journals.

H. A. MASON.

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AMBIGUITY REVISED

SEVEN TYPES OF AMBIGUITY, by William Empson (Revised Edition) (Chatto and Windus, 10/6).

The revised version of *Seven Types of Ambiguity* offers an opportunity to reconsider briefly the value of Mr. Empson's contribution to criticism and the nature of his influence. The revision amounts to little more than a tidying-up of the original book, which was made unnecessarily exasperating by its errors and misquotations and its lack of an index. This edition adds an index, a summary by chapters and a preface. It cuts out a few passages that Mr. Empson now thinks trivial or distracting, and adds a number of footnotes qualifying the analysis or giving further explanations, but in all essentials the book remains much as it was originally. The correction of the text is unfortunately incomplete and there are actually one or two new mistakes. The passage from *Tintern Abbey* on pages 150-151 is still misquoted and mispunctuated; on p. 148 the third line of *Spring and Fall* should read '*Leaves, like* the things of man . . . '; on p. 118 Scott's lines should read 'Easy live and *quiet* die'; on p. 183 the last line but one of Herbert's *Affliction* has 'though I *be* clean forgot' instead of 'though I *am* . . . '; on p. 153 'how' seems to have been omitted from the sentence 'I do not say that this makes it a good sonnet, or that I know it ought to be read aloud'; and the quotation from Marvell's Latin version of *On a Drop of Dew* on p. 80 still has *Cernis et* for *Cernis ut*. Some of these errors are trivial, others less so, but they all help to undermine the reader's confidence in a critic who stakes so much on close verbal and grammatical analysis.

One respect in which the book seems to date is the assumption that the author's is the only possible kind of close analysis of poetry and that any disagreement with his methods or conclusions will be due to a prejudice against all analysis. This may perhaps be partly due to the educational influence exerted during the last seventeen years by this book, among others, but it looks at times as if Mr. Empson wasn't quite sure what kind of audience he was addressing. Much of his general justification of critical analysis is admirable, especially the remarks on Atmosphere, Rhythm and Pure Sound, but he makes rather heavy weather of it at times, particularly in the last chapter with its unnecessary difficulty and its mathematical analogies, while there are lapses of tone which occasionally degenerate into mere undergraduate smartness. It is an allied crudity which leads to the bright paragraph on the Romantics (discussing them in terms which leave no room for adequate discrimination between them and the Victorians) for which Mr. Empson half-apologizes in a footnote, and the later remark on Keats—'one finds it hard, in reading some passages of Keats, to realize that they were long enjoyed empirically, without the reassuring aid now given us by sexual symbolism'—for which

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he doesn't, though he alters it to 'the theoretical reassurance now given by the psycho-analysts'.

As various critics have pointed out, however, there are more radical defects than these in Mr. Empson's critical practice. His characteristic fault, the lack of control by any over-riding sense of relevance, comes out interestingly in his very first example, the note on 'Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang':

> '. . . the comparison holds for many reasons; because ruined monastery choirs are places in which to sing, because they involve sitting in a row, because they are made of wood, are carved into knots and so forth, because they used to be surrounded by a sheltering building crystallized out of the likeness of a forest, and coloured with stained glass and painting like flowers and leaves, because they are now abandoned by all but the grey walls coloured like the skies of winter, because the cold and Narcissistic charm suggested by choir-boys suits well with Shakespeare's feeling for the object of the Sonnets and for various sociological and historical reasons (the protestant destruction of monasteries, fear of puritanism), which it would be hard now to trace out in their proportions; these reasons, and many more relating the simile to its place in the Sonnet, must all combine to give the line its beauty, and there is a sort of ambiguity in not knowing which of them to hold most clearly in mind.

This is one of the simpler and less extravagant of Mr. Empson's analyses, though one may doubt whether those carved knots and that Narcissistic charm are really there in the poem, but the point is that all these associations are not equally significant and there is less doubt than he suggests as to which are to be held most clearly in the mind. The extent to which everything is grist that comes to Mr. Empson's analytical mill may be seen in those accounts of Shakespeare passages which lump together all the alternatives of the *Arden* notes, containing every variety of possible meaning and eccentric conjecture, as equally relevant. The point applies to a great many other examples: in many instances some of the possible meanings are clearly subordinate to others, and while this fact is occasionally mentioned, it is not consistently recognized. Sometimes Mr. Empson will conclude a paragraph of analysis which one feels to be niggling and over-ingenious with a general summing-up which seems exactly right. Too often, however, he goes so far beyond the limits of relevance in his desire to be exhaustive that no such unifying summary is possible. (We find it implied, for example, of some poems that there is *no* adequate way of reading them aloud). It seems that what we have here is a form of the less profitable kind of Multiple Definition and the superstitious campaign against the One Right Meaning Superstition. One must insist that some faith in the possibility of agreement about the total effect of a poem is essential to criticism and that this need not imply absolute naïveté about meaning.

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Mr. Empson notoriously allows his intellect to get out of touch with his sensibility (what but a kind of crossword-puzzle ingenuity could have found the water-clock in 'Time with a gift of tears . . .'?) He goes on much too long spinning his complicated grammatical webs until the actual experience of reading the poem is left far behind. Even in his more effective examples he will sometimes spoil the effect by over-elaboration: the complexity of feeling in *A Valediction: of Weeping* would have been more rather than less convincingly demonstrated if some of the more doubtful possibilities of the grammar had been omitted. Sometimes he fails to convince us that the ambiguity has any poetic function at all.[1] Looseness of syntax can, after all, be sometimes merely irritating, and this seems to be so with many of those lines of the Sonnets and Donne which may be taken with either the preceding or the following phrases. Mr. Empson's justification of them: 'The renewal of energy gained from starting a new sentence is continually obtained here without the effect of repose given by letting a sentence stop' (p. 52) sounds a bit thin. There are in fact a number of examples where Mr. Empson is not using his analytical methods to explain the value of a poem, according to his account in the preface ('I felt sure that the example was beautiful and that I had, broadly speaking, reacted to it correctly . . . And it seemed to me that I was able in some cases partly to explain my feelings to myself by teasing out the meanings of the text') but for some less relevant and perhaps less reputable purpose.

A tendency to lose sight of judgments of value was one of the criticisms of *Seven Types* made by Miss Bradbrook in her essay in an early *Scrutiny* and by Professor James Smith in his *Criterion* review. A passage from the latter is quoted in the preface to this new edition: its main criticism is 'a vagueness as to the nature and scope of ambiguity'. I cannot see that Mr. Empson has produced any effective answer. On the question of relevance he simply says *tout court*, 'I recognized in the book that one does not want merely irrelevant ambiguities, and I should claim to have had some success in keeping them out'. On value judgments he hedges unconvincingly while making the significant admission, 'No doubt the study would be done badly if there were wrong judgments behind it'. The discussion then digresses into the less profitable argument whether a poem is a noumenon or a phenomenon before returning to the charge of vagueness about ambiguity:

> 'But it seems clear that I ought to try to answer a question: What claim do I make for the sort of ambiguity I consider here,

[1] It must be admitted that there is something of the same inability to indicate the total effect and the ultimate poetic value of the various meanings, as well as something of the same lack of discrimination between the meanings, in the analysis of Sonnet 129 by Laura Riding and Robert Graves which Mr. Empson took for his model. And he himself now admits that *some* allowance must be made for misprints and mispunctuation in the text of the Quarto.

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and is all good poetry supposed to be ambiguous?

'I think that it is; but I am ready to believe that the methods I was developing would often be irrelevant to the demonstration. As I understand it, there is always in great poetry a feeling of generalization from a case which has been presented definitely; there is always an appeal to a background of human experience which is all the more present when it cannot be named. I do not have to deny that the narrower chisel may cut more deeply into the heart. What I would suppose is that, whenever a receiver of poetry is seriously moved by an apparently simple line, what are moving in him are the traces of a great part of his past experience and of the structure of his past judgments'.

Mr. Empson's real subject, of course, is the way language is used in poetry, and it seems that it might have been better to lay the stress there throughout rather than on 'ambiguity' in itself. (It might also have made it not quite so easy to lose touch with value judgments). There is a paragraph in the last chapter which bears on this question where Mr. Empson weighs the possible objection that he ought to have considered meaning under Professor Richards's headings, Sense, Feeling, Tone and Intention. He answers that the process of apprehension, both of a poem and of its analysis, is not at all like reading a list: 'to state the fact and the judgment (the thought and the feeling) separately, as two different relevant matters, is a bad way of suggesting how they are combined; it makes the reader apprehend as two things what he must in fact apprehend as one thing'. But is a series of alternative meanings spread out in Mr. Empson's manner really any closer to the experience of reading the poem?—and doesn't the attempt to reduce Feeling, Tone and Intention to additional varieties of Sense without adequate distinction of function lead to unnecessary confusion? Not that one wants anything like a list under headings, but since *Seven Types* first appeared we have become accustomed to a type of analysis at once more flexible and sensitive and more disciplined, one which includes an awareness of the possible effects of ambiguity but doesn't regard the pursuit of them as the only way in which intelligence can be applied to poetry.

We have also seen, it must be confessed, the development of Mr. Empson's methods in his own later work, as well as their influence upon less original critics. Parts of *Some Versions of Pastoral* carried the extravagances of the earlier book to fantastic lengths, and the essays in *Shakespeare Survey* were not reassuring. On those critics who have been anxious to achieve a reputation for keeping up to date while lacking the kind of sensibility and intelligence required for genuinely original analysis, Mr. Empson's influence has made for a relaxation of discipline and has contributed to various kinds of irresponsible eccentricity. And most university teachers of English will know what can be achieved, in the way of discovering and unravelling 'ambiguities', by the bright undergraduate. Even if one treats *Seven Types* merely as an anthology

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of stimulating critical notes, the number of passages of analysis that can be simply recommended without comment is comparatively small. What it does provide is a great deal of useful material for discussion on particular poets, a valuable stimulus to thought and an ideal field for training in discrimination between the genuine and the bogus in criticism. This is the kind of debt owed to Mr. Empson by all of us who were undergraduates in the 'thirties. From the notes and preface to the revised version, which stand by the earlier methods and conclusions practically *in toto*, one gets the impression that it is likely to remain Mr. Empson's chief contribution, and one can only lament that so brilliant a talent should have accomplished no more.

R. G. Cox.

FOOTNOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

THE HARP OF ÆOLUS, by Geoffrey Grigson (Routledge, 15/-).

One often wondered what would become of the literary firebrands of the 'thirties as their inclination to scatter pyrotechnics waned with the years. The doughty editor of *New Verse* has become an authority on the Romantic Precursors, the lesser Augustans and the artistic followers of Blake; the present volume of essays illustrates the range of his interests. The old enthusiasms, for example, for Mr. Auden, remain; the dislike of, and desire to deny the importance of, the poetry of Mr. Eliot, which was characteristic of a generation that owed a large debt and did not want to admit it, remains; the taste for the bizarre, especially the eighteenth-century bizarre, together with a dislike of Miss Sitwell, remains; the new developments are a fairly solid and not very distinguished academicism and a tendency to borrow the mantle of Mr. Wyndham Lewis in attacking the visceral and the formless in art and poetry.

One agrees very largely with the drubbing of Mr. Dylan Thomas in the last essay, the protest against the slatternly technique and the 'ubiquitous confidence of the day that anything, any first impression, can be crammed into formless verse without the self-discipline and self-criticism which are the sources of form', but there does not seem much point in holding up Dryden's practice or Boileau's principles at this time of day. Sympathetically, especially now with the Chagall Exhibition going on, as one sees the risked brick in the following—

> 'But in combatting the slide into romance, into idiot romance, we have to be careful not to encourage the white and dry which sterilize the creative impulse. Even that danger does not mean that we should be afraid to recover our wits and our honesty, and speak out now and then, afraid because we may seem to be betraying a cause to the old enemy, and assuring Sir John Squire, or whoever carries his mantle in these later years, that he was right'

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—one cannot help suspecting a connection between 'white and dry' and the rather crumbly half-brick chucked round the end of the essay on Constable:

> 'Somewhere, I sometimes think in some human cell left somewhere in the wood and mensuration of de Chirico's dummy, were composed the fragmentary poems of Mr. T. S. Eliot'.

And I can attach no meaning, not even the old-fashioned one which Mr. Grigson is anxious to avoid, to the antithesis outlined in the essay on Barnes:

> 'Form and interest, structure and selective observation—in these, and in the lack of them, has been most apparent the weakness of English poetry (and painting too) in the last hundred years. Barnes, Hopkins, Hardy . . . Auden, though not I think Yeats, and not Eliot, in spite of their degrees of stature, have been strong where others have been weak in both these qualities'.

How does Mr. Auden get into that company on those grounds? It is very extraordinary that an enthusiast for Hopkins should not draw attention, with regret, to his (in every sense) disastrous influence—manifest in at least one quotation from Mr. Thomas—in easing the deliquescence of Romanticism which he deplores. Hopkins' influence has decidedly not been on the side of discipline and selection. It is also extraordinary, in view of his liking for Augustan standards and his general 'no nonsense' attitude, that Mr. Grigson is not irritated by the facility into which Mr. Auden's once striking talents have degenerated, but still refers to him as an authority. Mr. Auden's forms are very largely external framework into which he crams the products of an exuberant fancy.

In the last section of the essay on the forgotten Augustan, William Diaper, Mr. Grigson reflects on 'the iniquity of oblivion' in literary matters and the importance of a contemporary reputation, and makes a plea for 'the scholars, bibliographers and pedants' who preserve names and compile lists of works, and issues a warning against 'those narrow, vocal, and powerful circles of the day who dictate to us our preferences in art and letters'. I cannot feel very much interest in Diaper, but Mr. Grigson makes no excessive claims. On this kind of theme he writes interesting footnotes to literature. The essay on the Aeolian harp contains a useful addition to what Professor Livingston Lowes has told us about the workings of Coleridge's imagination and is, indeed, a valuable piece of criticism of *Dejection*, the rest of the essay on *The Castle of Indolence* and other odds and ends being by the way. *The Upas Tree* helps us with Erasmus Darwin, Blake's *Songs* and *Childe Harold*, and helps also the student of politicians' clichés; one sees the varying degrees of artistic use that could be made of a bit of thorough-going mumbo-jumbo popularized by the notorious George Stevens. *Horse-chestnut Trees* has a similar annotatory function for art and poetry; I wonder whether Mr. Grigson would agree that Yeats' tree:

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'O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer . . . '

is realized with an imaginative force comparable to that of Blake's rose. Mr. Grigson writes well on William Barnes, relating him to his roots in the eighteenth century—an advantage of his isolation—and to Hopkins and Hardy. This is the most informative and serious essay in the book. It will be seen that all these are explorations of the by-ways of literature. No pleas are made for changes in valuation and no major writers are discussed except in passing.

The essays on art do ask us to think differently about several painters. Mr. Grigson makes a strong plea for us to admire Stubbs as a painter and an engraver and illustrates it tellingly with two beautiful pieces of balanced and elegant design, an anatomical drawing of a hen and a detail of a carriage. The case for Francis Danby is less cogent; it is overloaded with investigations into, and speculations about, his private life and the illustrations do not support the text as they should—perhaps the war made it impossible to get the appropriate reproductions. (There is, by the way, an odd discrepancy between the title of *The Evening Gun* and the quoted account of it by Hawthorne). I do not see why it is necessary to cry up Courbet in order to cry down Constable or vice versa, and this kind of writing seems very imprecise:

> '. . . even in black and white reproduction, this poetic grain of Courbet's paint does not disappear. But without colour, how ordinary, how merely photographic, graphic of immediate light and glance Constable appears in the plates of some book! And even more so in his drawings. At first one feels in front of Constable, "This is nature. This is wet sky over Hampstead"; then one feels "This is ordinary nature, the skin of nature"; then one realizes "This is Constable, or Constable naturized". In front of Courbet, one feels nature, solid, real, interpreted from the bloom to the bone, made into poetry; realizes as de Chirico maintains, that Courbet "felt more profoundly than Delacroix the sense of reality" and "is for that very reason more poetic and romantic than Delacroix" '.

What can this photographic test demonstrate? What do 'poetry', 'reality' and 'romantic' mean in this context? It seems merely to drag an ancient and unprofitable controversy into the comparison and to conflict with a good deal that Mr. Grigson says in *The Vision of the English Romantics*. The essay on Henry Moore is more careful and discriminating, and I think shows a sense of both Mr. Moore's strength and his limitations.

It will be seen, therefore, that the book is very uneven in quality, and that the literary essays are on the whole much the best. Perhaps one should add that for a book with some claims to factual exactitude, the proof reading has been regrettably careless—I do not think that, for example, Constable ever painted a picture of Stratford Mill.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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MR. AUDEN'S QUARTET

THE AGE OF ANXIETY, by W. H. Auden (Random House, New York, $2.50).

'That enchanted country of drink that was the world one had been young in, in the twenties! One drank to go back there, where one's friends were, where life was irresponsible and daring, where it was passionate, amusing and frank. One got homesick under the grind of the depression and one could not help slipping away. But then one did not find what one had come for: one's friends were no more their old selves than one was one's own self; one could pick up one's cues for the old clever play, but a moment of alcoholic revelation would show up its essential banality, its superficiality, its falsity, and one would walk out with indignation and rudeness'.—Edmund Wilson, *Memoirs of Hecate County*.

Mr. Auden walks out with seemingly complacent resignation after serving up a similar regressive experience—or rather comments on the more general aspects of the experience—with copious draughts of private reminiscence, the dregs of his twenty years of poetic writing, the private and public elements loosely held together by a superimposed formalism.

Four voices or instruments (slightly differentiated in an external way by attribution to a young American serving in the navy, a Jewish girl 'not so young as she looked', a middle-aged (?) Irish-American, a mature doctor-airman) are placed in 'an unprejudiced space in which nothing particular ever happens' and allowed to generalize in formal patterns on the theme of man's history and fate, the problem of living in and out of time. Thus the 'Prologue' consists of three balanced movements in each of which the four voices take a more or less equal part either 'thinking' or 'speaking' (it makes no difference). They 'brood over being' or daydream, reflect on the war, dread the future. In Part Two the doctor-airman states the theme, describing in succession the Seven Ages of Man while each of the other voices contributes comment or 'appealing private detail'. Part Three is a strictly routed Quest through seven stages.

This external formality is intensified by the use throughout of alliteration. The feat of versification has aroused admiring comment of a kind now familiar. 'Problems of form and technique seem to bother him very little. You could say to him: "Please write me a double ballade on the virtues of a certain brand of tooth-paste, which also contains at least ten anagrams on the names of well-known politicians, and of which the refrain is as follows . . . " Within twenty-fours, your ballade would be ready—and it would be good'.[1] Mr. Auden is still 'happily in love with expression', still exhibits a gift for words and for the sheer fun of the thing can do you imitations of Joyce:

[1]Christopher Isherwood in *New Verse*, November, 1937.

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Your lie is showing
Your creed is creased . . .

mind your poise
And take up your cues . . .

or of Anglo-Saxon tight-lipped understatement—

Many have perished; more will . . .

or 'gallows humour', *e.g.*, death by bombing,

we laid our eggs
Neatly in their nest, a nice deposit
Which instantly hatched:

or by drowning,

They swallowed and sank, ceased thereafter
To appear in public; exposed to snap
Verdicts of sharks, to vague inquiries
Of amoeboid monsters . . .

or parodies of Eliot,

For the journey home
Arriving by roads one already knows
At sites and sounds one has sensed before . . .

or jazzed-up versions of your favourite passages from the Classics (death of Orpheus, invocation to *alma Venus*)—and a great many other reminiscences from his wide reading and his own earlier work.

The difference between the world of poetry and the 'actual world where time is real and in which, therefore, poetry can take no interest' is further accentuated by the use of a prose framework. The prose insists on the banality of the natural setting, the bar on Third Avenue, New York City, the apartment on the West Side, and perhaps in the interests of this banality is itself deliberately banal. 'What they had just dreamed they could no longer recall exactly, but when Emble and Rosetta looked at each other, they were conscious of some sweet shared secret which it might be dangerous to remember too well'. Or this: 'For the world from which their journey has been one long flight rises up before them now as if the whole time it had been hiding in ambush, only waiting for the worst moment to reappear to its fugitives in all the majesty of its perpetual fury'.

From this last quotation it will have become clear that prose is also used to elucidate the action on the poetic plane as well as on the banal level. Indeed some of the things which ought properly to be enacted in the poetry are described in the prose stage directions. Thus, in the 'fancy-governed sequence' in Part Three we are told that the figures move 'obedient to their own *mysterious* laws of direction' (my italics) and in Part Five—'The Masque'—we find the following: 'Moving well together to the music, Rosetta and Emble

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were becoming obviously attracted to each other. In times of war even the crudest kind of positive affection between persons seems extraordinarily beautiful, a noble symbol of the peace and forgiveness of which the whole world stands so desperately in need. So to the dancers and spectators alike, this quite casual attraction seemed and was of immense importance'.

The inner organization of this 'baroque eclogue' is unsatisfactory in the same way as that of all Mr. Auden's previous poems. 'The embarrassing uncertainty of tone and poise', 'the shameless opportunism in the passage from phrase to phrase and from item to item', the immature use of private neuroses and memories can be amply illustrated from *The Age of Anxiety*. An example that can be isolated without unfairness is in Part Four of the poem—'The Dirge'—

> 'Whether they thought of Nature, of her unending stream of irrelevant events without composition or center, her reckless waste of value, her alternate looks of idiotic inertia and insane ferocity, or whether they thought of Man, of the torpor of his spirit, the indigent dryness of his soul, his bottomless credulity, his perverse preference for the meretricious or the insipid—it seemed impossible to them that either could have survived so long had not some semi-divine stranger with superhuman powers, some Gilgamesh or Napoleon, some Solon or Sherlock Holmes, appeared from time to time to rescue both, for a brief bright instant, from their egregious destructive blunders. And for such a great one who, long or lately, has always died or disappeared, they now lamented thus'.

The first strophe ends with the lines,

> Mourn for him now
> Our lost dad
> Our colossal father.

The second describes how the hero reached the end of his journey

> and saw
> Shimmering in the shade the shrine of gold,
> The magical marvel no man dare touch,
> Between the towers the tree of life
> And the well of wishes
> The waters of joy.

Here is the third stanza, entire:

> Then he harrowed hell,
> Healed the abyss
> Of tropical instinct and trifling flux,
> Laundered it, lighted it, made it lovable with
> Cathedrals and theories; thanks to him
> Brisker smells abet us,
> Cleaner clouds accost our vision

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And honest sounds our ears.
For he ignored the Nightmares and annexed their ranges,
Put the clawing Chimaeras in cold storage,
Berated the Riddle till it roared and fled,
Won the Battle of Whispers,
Stopped the Stupids, stormed into
The Fumblers' Forts, confined the Sulky
To their drab ditches and drove the Crashing
Bores to their bogs,
Their beastly moor.

'You haven't changed much, have you, Ian, since you were head Prefect and Captain of the First Fifteen?' The point at which Mr. Auden seems to have been arrested is perhaps not, as the above quotations might suggest, *The Orators* or *The Ascent of F6*—although *The Age of Anxiety* contains reminiscences of both—but *New Year Letter*. A comparison between the Epilogue of that book and the Epilogue which forms Part Six of *The Age of Anxiety* suggests that Mr. Auden has been marking time since 1941.[1] The former work described the bewilderment of the ego

translated from her own informal world

and the consequent

decline
To a vita minima . . .

In both poems the attempt of the ego

To migrate again to her family place,
To the hanging gardens of Eros . . .

is declared illusory.

And the fancy-governed sequence leads us all
Back to the labyrinth where either
We are found or lose ourselves for ever.

In this dilemma Mr. Auden recommended resignation under the shadow of a distinguished name:

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[1]There is a hint on p. 93 of *For The Time Being* that Mr. Auden acknowledges this. The title poem covers much of the same ground as the latter part of *The Age of Anxiety*. Here, too, the Epilogue sounds the familiar cry:

Once again
As in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed
To do more than entertain it as an agreeable
Possibility, once again we have sent Him away,
Begging though to remain His disobedient servant,
The promising child who cannot keep His word for long.

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Nevertheless,
Whatever the situation and the blame,
Let the lips do formal contrition
For whatever is going to happen,

Time remembered bear witness to time required,
The positive and negative ways through time
Embrace and encourage each other
In a brief moment of intersection.

That the orgulous spirit may while it can
Conform to its temporal focus with praise
Acknowledging the attributes of
One immortal, one infinite Substance;

And the shabby structure of indolent flesh
Give a resonant echo to the Word which was
From the beginning, and the shining
Light be comprehended by the darkness.

The doctor-airman withdrawing as from Eden reflects even more hopelessly

We're quite in the dark: we do not
Know the connection between
The clock we are bound to obey
And the miracle we must not despair of;

Neither Reason nor Imagination can serve to find 'the new locus'

the place of birth
Is too obvious and near to notice,
Some dull dogpatch a stone's throw
Outside the walls, reserved
For the eyes of faith to find.

And faith is for the old reasons impossible. In repeating the reasons Mr. Auden seems also to be informing his critics that it is useless to insist:

We would rather be ruined than changed

and

our minds insist on
Their own disorder as their own punishment.

The same voice earlier in the poem advises:

O clear Princess,
Learn from your hero his love of play,
Cherish his childishness . . .
. . . for the world he is true to
Is his own creation; to act like father,
And beget like God a gayer echo,
An unserious self, is the sole thought
Of this bragging boy.

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In taking a charitable view of the poems Mr. Auden wrote in the 'thirties, appeal was often made to the presence therein of 'a profound inner disturbance', 'a turbid pressure of emotions from below' to justify a verdict which did not exclude the hope of promising development. It is hard to believe that any such thing prompted the verse of *The Age of Anxiety*. One can still admire the breadth and range of reference, spend hours hunting the sources of his casual allusions. Mr. Auden has gone on reading and assimilating. One can even admire the discovery of a form which makes a virtue out of the characteristic weaknesses. It is not difficult to sympathise with the plight of the author or share the depressing verdict on the present state of the world. Yet it is with disappointment that after working through the poem one reflects on the absence of any spark of vitality (other than in the ingenuity) and turning to the calendar one is inclined to detect a sinister overtone in the words put into the mouth of the doctor-airman to describe the Seventh Age of Man:

> He is tired out;
> His last illusions have lost patience
> With the human enterprise. The end comes: he
> Joins the majority, the jaw-dropped
> Mildewed mob and is modest at last.
> There his case rests: let who can disprove.

H. A. MASON.

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES IN READING, by E. G. Biaggini (Hutchinson's Scientific Publications, 7/6).

This book is a continuation, in quantity and scope, of the exercises contained in Dr. Biaggini's earlier book, *The Reading and Writing of English*. As such it will be welcomed by the readers of *Scrutiny*, especially those concerned with the teaching of English in schools or in W.E.A. classes.

The exercises are grouped around such various themes as scenery (including 'travel book' scenery), human relationships (including a specimen of Mr. Murry's classic fatuities on D. H. Lawrence), criticism (literary, musical and dramatic), political propaganda and philosophy. To have called the exercises 'progressive' is misleading, for they do not represent a graduated 'course' of training. (The two large sections of Coomaraswamy, for example, would hardly make profitable exercises for school work, even in the top forms). Furthermore, in the early exercises, the framing of the questions to the pupil (who is presumably a beginner at this type of work), is hardly sufficiently close or detailed to secure the appropriate direction of emphasis. The questions to the exercises in A. F. Scott's books *Poetry and Appreciation* and *Meaning and Style* are an example of an attempt (not always successful) at the

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close formulations required at the early stages of training in literary analysis.

A general criticism that can be made of Dr. Biaggini's book is that he seeks too deliberately to eschew anything that resembles what he calls 'an apparatus of criticism'. He is attempting, in fact, to train the reader's sensibility without having recourse to a formal training in literary criticism. But we must disagree with Dr. Biaggini when he says that 'an apparatus of criticism . . . is an imperfect instrument for the discovery of the new and the unknown'. On the contrary, it enables the reader to select the correct point of insertion into the text under his consideration, and to make his comments upon the text with the maximum economy and pungency.

Part of the object of training in comparison and analysis is the dislodgement of established literary opinions—opinions, that is, established on anything but a close reading of the text. A large proportion of the teaching of English at a W.E.A. level, if it is to be successful, has to consist in countering an entirely useless knowledgeability *about* literature, and in disabusing one's pupils of a view of literature derived directly from *John o' London's Weekly*. After a little preliminary training, the pupil can be induced to make damaging comments about unidentified passages upon which he would never have ventured had he known the name of their author. A failing of Dr. Biaggini's book is that it has all too few passages from such modern novelists as are, by circulating library standards, 'established'. He certainly has a 'good' specimen of Cronin, but his selections from Ouida and Corelli are, at this date, rather a diversion of the main strategic effort.

But whatever our criticisms may be, we must be grateful to have such a book in print. Indeed the rarity of this type of book is a matter for some comment. In view of the well-known shameless haste with which certain dons turn their English lecture-notes into profitable print, it is indeed surprising that the market is so lacking in books of exercises in reading. Can it be because the making of such books demands, above all, the ability to read with attention and intelligence? Whatever may be the cause for the rarity of its type, all teachers who are concerned to make critical reading the basis of an effective intellectual and emotional discipline will certainly find Dr. Biaggini's book an almost indispensable training aid.

T. A. BIRRELL.

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